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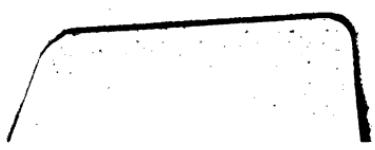
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TRADITIONARY STORIES

OF

OLD FAMILIES,

AND

LEGENDARY ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

FAMILY HISTORY.

WITH NOTES, HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL

BY ANDREW PICKEN,

AUTHOR OF THE "DOMINIE'S LEGACY,"
&c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TRADITIONARY STORIES,

&c.

THE HAYS,

AND

THE FIGHT OF LONCARTY.

CHAPTER I.

ALL true Scotsmen will firmly believe that Kenneth the Third, of thief-hunting memory, was the *eightieth* king, at least¹, who had dominion over their unparalleled country. How many hundreds of monarchs besides may have ruled and “rang”² in that ancient kingdom before tradition could remember or history

¹ See Note A. at the end of this Tradition.

² We like to resort to words that were in use before

could write, it is not for us now particularly to affirm.

It was in the course of those romantic days when fable was considered as good as truth, and Poetry and Prose walked hand in hand together, in the imaginative ignorance of the olden time, that the great family of the Hays first began to have an historical origin in Scotland. Every one has heard of the battle of Loncarty, and how the Scots fought, and the Danes fell; but every one has *not* heard all the veritable particulars thereof, which have been revealed to us by the sure word of black-letter history, and transmitted tradition, assisted, no doubt,

our language, if not our manners, fell into a decline, as in the well-known old ballad :—

“ In days when our king Robert *rang*,
His trews they cost him half-a-crown ;
He swore they were a groat* o'er dear,
And ca'd the tailor thief and loon.”

A specimen both of expression and economy, somewhat in contrast with the practice of most monarchs who at present “ *ring*. ”

* Fourpence.

where need is, by the ruminating gestations of fancy.

Denmark, at the time we speak of, was a warlike kingdom ; although Scotland, of course, was much its superior ; and it was after the crowning of Haco the Fourth, its puissant monarch (we would not be positive about these ancient historicals), that a grand council was summoned of the nobles of the land, concerning some weighty matter that was to be laid before them, and the worthy lieges of the northern snows wondered what was hatching for the coming time.

The day of summons at length arrived, and the king and nobles were assembled in a magnificent hall, built of chipped logs, and hung round with a drapery of bears' hides ; and, a secret ambition having come with a swelling effect over the monarch's heart, his majesty rose from his stool to make a speech.

" Nobles of Denmark, and mighty puissances," he said, " we are, without doubt, a great people, and I am, as you know, a potent

king. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that we are exceedingly poor, and have neither gold nor silver to build palaces withal, nor stamped coin to buy fine stuffs, nor flocks to make feasts of, like the nations of the south, nor a sufficiency of generous liquor for this exceeding cold climate ; while these Saxon islanders, in the western ocean, have a thousand good things that we greatly desire, and verily that we ought to have. Let us, therefore, cross the sea in our ships, and invade them at once, and we will bring home a glorious booty !”

Never was a king’s speech better received. We cannot pledge ourselves for the precise words, but we know it had an instantaneous effect. The council saw at once the justice of the suggestion, and were unanimous in its favour. Proclamations were issued for the repairing of ships, and the whole coast of Denmark resounded with the clang of active preparation. In three weeks’ time [or thereabouts] the fleet was ready, and sailed forth from the shores of the Baltic; for the ravage and robbery so pleasingly contemplated had

been undertaken on a scale that rendered it respectable.

When the news of all this reached Scotland, the consternation and anxiety were proportionate to the occasion. But King Kenneth himself was but a poor man ; the wealth, such as it was, being in the hands of the nobles, who kept the king, as at present, in proper subjection. So that, having the usual trouble with his “barons bold,” his majesty, though puissant over the lower order of thieves, found himself in no good condition to resist the threatened invasion in a manner becoming the high character of Scotland.

At length the Danish fleet was fairly descried from a cape land, called the Red-head, in Angus-shire, while the Scottish monarch himself was then

— “at Stirling town
Drinking the blood red wine,”

or engaged in some similarly kingly occupation.

Learning the tidings, his majesty immediately despatched “letters” — that is, messages by

word of mouth, for real *letters* would have been of little use, supposing his majesty could read himself, which he could not—to all his nobles and chief men that could be reached, for them to come forth with their followers, and meet him near the east coast, to fight the Danes, before they should take the kingdom.

But the invading Danes, still lingering at sea, when they got a sight of the black hills and hard-featured shores of “auld Scotland,” were considerably damped in their anticipations of a rich paradise, and, before they landed, held a grave deliberation as to future proceedings. They said, that though the Scots were undoubtedly their ancient foes, and ought to be murdered and robbed for their special advantage, as had been done before, nevertheless, as the present was in reality more an adventure for booty, a sort of commercial speculation, after the ancient fashion, than any actual project for warlike glory, it would be much better to sail on to the southern end of the island, where what they were in quest of was in far greater plenty; and where they might not, after all,

find such a desperate resistance, as was well known to be usually given by a hungry people, who had nothing to spare to strangers. This scheme, however, feasible as it was, and all the desirable prospects that it opened up to the chiefs, whose mouths watered at the description given of English wealth, fell to the ground before the consideration of their limited numbers; and they thought it better to try the Scots still, divided as they were among themselves, and glean from them whatever they could, than venture into the open plains of a broad country and among a united people.

Landing, accordingly, at the mouth of the Esk, their rapacious legions soon over-ran the coast country. Robbery and rapine had its full sway for a time: the unresisting people fled before the invaders, who spread terror and desolation wherever they went; and harried and burnt all the towns and villages from Bervie in Forfar to the Frith of Tay. It was not until the invaders were within a few miles of Perth, which they had determined immediately to carry by storm, as well as to gut

and pillage the old palace of Bertha, that the army, hastily collected by the Scottish king, were able to offer some check to their progress.

When the Scots came up, they found the Danes in a crowded encampment on the face of a hill, near a village by the Tay, in the parish of Redgorton, in Perthshire, and still — though known chiefly in the neighbourhood as an extensive bleaching-ground — well remembered in history by the name of Loncarty. When the Danes saw the Scottish array approach, and the latter descried the formidable legions of their invaders, pitched rank behind rank on the face of the height, a solemn pause took place between the armies, as if both felt that the fate of their existence or that of their country was almost too much to be put to the risk of a single engagement.

But we must now, short as the chapter is, turn over to the immediate subject of our tradition.

CHAPTER II.

ON the edge of a hollow, on a branch of the stream, near which the armies lay, there lived at this time an industrious “landw^tart man,” of the name of Hay, or La Hay, or Haya, as some of the ancient records spell the name, who, notwithstanding the terrors of invasion, peacefully prosecuted the labours of the field. Athletic and powerful, though not very rich, this farmer had two sons as brave as himself, yet by no means as peaceably inclined, or on an occasion like this so disposed to their labours, when war and ravage were almost at their door.

The farmer had doubtless many desires for the settlement of his children, and his sons had many ambitions for lands and lairdships; besides, each had his sweetheart whom he dreamt of o’ nights, and whom he was doubtless exceedingly impatient to marry. When, there-

fore, the blast of war blew almost at their ears, and the cry of the coming foe began to be shouted along the valley of Glenshee, the hearts of the young Hays beat high at the sound ; they looked on their father's ploughings with youthful contempt, and murmured and muttered, as young men will do, that no one would lead them to the forthcoming battle.

“ Why should we labour here,” they said, “ on this cold sterile spot, while there are rich lands on the Tay from Errol to Kinnoul, which the king has to give to his brave defenders ? The Danes are come to the very hill of Luncarty, while we roost here over our plough, like base louts of the field. Will no one give us a sword or hauberk, that we may strike a stroke for Scotland and the king ? ”

“ Hooly, boys, hooly,” said the cool landwart man, “ the maiden does not dance till she’s bid to the floor, and the piper does not pipe till he knows who hires him. The lands, to be sure, are broad in Strathtay, and rich in Gowrie, but every cheese must keep to its own chisset, and every man to his own trade, till fortune

comes to buy him lands that his father never paid for. So keep your valour till you get the word, and hold your plough irons to defend your own heads. Up ! the sun is high, let us go to the ploughing."

With reluctant steps the youths followed to their labours, but the sough of war rose up through the glen ; the boom and buzz of distant squadrons disturbed their industry and swerved their attention, the shrill note of the pibroch came fitfully on the blast to make their hearts bound with stirring thoughts, and crowds of stragglers hurrying down the valley unsettled their minds to their lowly toil.—But we must now return to the king's camp in the neighbourhood, and speak of the great things that were doing in the war.

The armies were now ready for the onset, the Danes descending to the foot of the hill, and the Scots in lines on the little field below. Malcolm Duff, "Prince of Scotland and Lord of Cumber¹," led the right wing, Duncan,

¹ See Note B, at the end of this Tradition.

thane of Athol, the left, while the king himself, with his principal nobles and best men, took charge of the centre. The anxiety of the Scots monarch for his kingdom and his existence was shown by the pains he took to animate his army. "To move his nobles with courage and spirit," says the old chronicler Boethius, whose graphic account of this engagement we cannot hope to equal, "King Kenneth discharged them of all malise and duties to him for five years to come, then promised, by open proclamation, to give ilk man that brought him the head of ane Dane ten pund, or else land perpetually." When this was done, the worthy king "made orison to God to send his cause gude fortune."

"The armies stood long arrayet," continues the able chronicler, "while at last the Scots, too fierce and desirous of battle, came with incredibl shower of dargets, arrows, and ganyes¹ on the Danes, who, impatient to sustain the invasion of Scottis, came forward with great mola." No corresponding shout, however, was

¹ See Note C, at the end of this Tradition.

set up by Kenneth's army, who joined in battle without even a sound of trumpet, and both “fought so fiercely that nane of them might sustain the preiss of the other.”

But soldiers are mercenary like most others, and Scotsmen (like Englishmen) seldom forget their individual interests; so the “ten pund” that the king had promised, so ran in each man's mind while he fought, that the heads of Danes, with a view to their value, were the chief thing that all aimed at, to the great detriment of the general battle. Thus, whenever a Scotsman killed a Dane, his great care was to cut off the man's head, and carry it, for safety, dangling in his hand, or else to run with it to the rear to secure his *ten pund*, and leave the victory to take care of itself. The consequences of this preponderance of individual interests were soon manifest; and when the Danes observed it, says Boethius, picturesquely, “they cryet out with a schill voice, either to have victory,” over such a head-cutting people, “or all at once to die.” So, incontinent, they rushed with

such propellant forward, that both the wings of Scottis were put to flight."

" Nochtless," however, continues our quaint historian, " the mid battle resisted valiantly the haill press of enemies. Now stood our army in great danger, for mony of the Scottis fled" (head in hand), " and were cruelly slane by the Danes."

The Hays, meantime, kept coolly labouring at their plough, although the noise and havoc of the distant battle sorely tried the self-denial of the young men. When the bruit arose, however, that their countrymen were beginning to flee, they could stand it no longer, and taking their coulters in their hands, for want of better weapons, away they set, at least, to have a stroke at the dastards of their own people, who now began to run across the fields near them. Proceeding onwards towards the army, they came to a narrow pass in the rear, through which the retreating Scots were rushing to get out of the danger.

Fired with indignation at this increasing cowardice, while they saw their country now

at the mercy of the invaders, although the king still fought with the centre division of his men, “naked of both the wings,” the gallant countryman and his two sons, “thinking nought so honourable as to die valiantly among *sae mony noblemen*,” placed themselves in the gorge of the passage, “nocht far fra the battal, where gret numbers of Scottis were slane miserably fleeing,” and slew both Danes who pursued and Scots who fled; saying, that all men deserved to die who turned their backs upon an enemy.

This noble conduct had an instantaneous effect to stay the panic, as our worthy chronicler most picturesquely states. So “ane certain number of Scots, who were right valiant and forcy, cryet out with schill voice, ‘All gude Scottis men, return and renew battal, for defence of your king and realm, and avise now, whether it is more honest to jeopardy you with gude chance, in defence of your prince, than to be shamefully murdert in your fleeing !’”

Whether this cogent speech was made by the Hays themselves is not stated, but what by

exhortations, and what by heavy blows with the yokes of their ploughs, the gallant farmer, assisted by his family, “constrained the Scottis whilk were fleeing, to return with him to battle against their enemies.” They did so, and the Danes “astonest by their returning, and trysting” that this was “some new army coming on thar backs, left the chase of Scots, and returned to their folk. Then the Scots (whilk were vanquished afore), were raised with new spirit and courage, rushed fiercely on their enemies and put them to flight.” Great slaughter was made in the battle, but more in the chase. “So the Scots,” continues the chronicler, “gat this day ane glorious victory,” particularly creditable to the perseverance of the mid wing of the army; “yet, maist honourable to Hay and his valiant sons.”

So unexpected was the advantage, after so disastrous a morning, and so complete and final was the discomfiture of the invaders, that the joy of the victors was almost as boundless as the king’s gratitude to the patriotic individuals, who had been the means of achiev-

ing so glorious an adventure. The night after the battle was passed in the Scots camp “with singing and dancing, and incredible blitheness,” and the succeeding day was looked forward to with pleasure, that the nobles and men who thus rejoiced might witness the honours given to Hay and his brave sons.

But the spoil was so considerable that had been taken from the invaders,—their ravages through this part of the country having been very productive while it lasted,—and the occasion so important of awarding its distribution, that the king, returning to his castle of Bertha, there commanded the valiant farmer, who had been the means of his glorious achievement, to be arrayed in cloth and splendid apparel, and forthwith brought before him.

The good man, however, nothing desiring the offered splendour, and considering that he had done nought but his duty to his country, “came with his sons in their auld and rusty habit, still sprinkled with the dust and sweat of battall,” and modestly waited the king’s pleasure. It was a brave sight to see his ma-

jesty in the midst of his nobles, awarding to each leader his portion of the spoil, while crowds of people rent the air with acclamation, as Hay and his sons came forth into the midst. “What wilt thou have, brave man?” said the king, “and how shall I content thee for what thou hast done for thy country and for me?”

“I have done but my duty, honourable liege,” said the farmer, “and it is not for myself that I would ask a reward; but my sons have maidens that they long to wed, and there are rigs of land from Errol to Kinnoul, that bear a crop of richer promise than the watery pastures in the Spital of Glenshee.”

“Thou hast said right and modestly withal,” answered the king; “and thy gallant sons shall have such rigs as a willing maiden may not refuse. To-morrow, make proclamation in our good city of Perth,” he added, turning round to his attendants, “that we meet with our court at the Stone of Errol, and as far as the hawk shall fly, from our own hand, and until the spot where he alights again, if that shall

extend over a shire of our kingdom, these lands shall the Hays have in full perpetuity, for the service they have rendered us on the field of Loncarty."

Accordingly, after a day of acclamation and joy, in which Kenneth and his army went in procession through his good city of Perth, the admiration of the people being more given to the gallant Hay and his brave sons than to all the nobles then in the monarch's train; the whole assembled at the Stone of Errol, amidst a gay crowd of lords and ladies, that the king's award might be honourably given. The gay company was that morning set like hunters in the greenwood. The falconer was ready, and handed his best bird to the king, while all the nobles stood round, and envied the honours done to Hay and his sons.

The hood was taken off the impatient bird, it rose like an arrow off the king's finger; and while it mounted high in air the people gave a shout that made the welkin ring, and could almost be heard at the hill of Kilspindie. Away galloped the horsemen forth into the plain,

that they might see and give witness where the falcon should fly.

Away went the bird out of all men's sight, and it flew and flew and never stopped, until it began to draw near to the town of Ross, which is not far from "bonnie Dundee." Then it poised itself, and began to descend, until it lighted down on "ane stane," which is still pointed out to the traveller in these parts, and called the Falcon Stane until this day; and so when the messengers returned the king gave to Hay all the lands over which the falcon flew, between Tay and Errol, "quhilk lands are yet inhabited by his posterity."¹

"Attour," saith Boethius, "that nane of his valiant deeds should perish, but aye remain in recent and perpetual memory, King Kenneth gave him three red shields in ane field of silver, to bear in manner of arms in place of the yoke, to signify that he was promoted from small and obscure lyneage, to great honours, riches, and lands."

¹ See Note D. at the end of this Tradition.

So this is the origin of the great family of the Hays, which hath spread itself over every part of the united empire; and this became the beginning of the many honours deservedly heaped upon the numerous descendants of the valiant farmer, from the day of Loncarty until the present time.¹

Nor is our excellent tradition without a moral. Nay, indeed, it contains a double induction, which is more than can be said for many a longer tale. For, besides the prominent one so creditable to the Hays, its chief pith lies, after all, in the following maxim,—that no king, when he goes forth to battle, ought to offer a reward of “ten pund” for the cutting off of heads in the heat of the fray.

¹ See note E.

a proceeding at which the latter were exceedingly astonished.

Though the old principle of man's preying upon his fellow is rooted in the same soil and evolves itself still by the same unceasing efforts, it can seldom now go so direct to its object, and requires a longer apprenticeship to the world, to master the complexities of society and make sure of its victim.

NOTE B, page 11.

It may be hardly necessary to remind the reader that Cumber, or Cumberland, was considered part of the Scottish kingdom; and the kings of that country gave their eldest sons the title of princes of it; in order, no doubt, that they should prize it more because it was debateable land, and usually claimed by the English, to which after many "just and necessary" wars, it was, of course, ultimately ceded.

NOTE C, page 12.

Ganyes were a sort of heavy dart or javelin, thrown from some engine, probably of the cross-bow character, which some speak of as "ane irone gunn." These machines were much used in ancient times, must have been very useful for destruction, and were probably accompanied by some machinery. Douglas thus speaks of them, in his translation of Virgil :—

" So thick the ganyeis and the flanys flew,
That of takles and shafts all the field was strew't."

NOTE D, page 20.

During the times when, from the similarity of appearance on the field of battle which the wearing of mail armour gave to men, it was customary for each clan or name to wear a particular badge in the helmet or bonnet, generally a sprig of some plant, the Hays adopted the mistletoe for theirs. There was formerly, as we are informed by Mr. Hay Allan, whom we shall hereafter have further occasion to quote, in the neighbourhood of Errol, and not far from the Falcon stone, a vast oak, of an unknown age, and upon which grew a profusion of the plant. Many charms and legends were considered to be connected with the tree, and the duration of the family of Hay was said to be united with its existence. It was believed that a sprig of the mistletoe, cut by a Hay, on Allhallowmas eve, *with a new dirk*, and after going round the tree three times sunwise, and pronouncing a certain spell, was a sure charm against all glamour or witchery, and an infallible guard in the day of battle.

A sprig of this plant, gathered in the same manner, was then often placed in the cradles of infants, and thought to defend them from being changed for elf-bairns by the fairies. It was also an ancient prophecy, that, when the root of this oak had perished, "the grass should grow in the hearth of Errol, and a raven should sit in the falcon's nest." This, like many other traditional prophecies, has never been exactly fulfilled, although the oak has disappeared for many years, unless the passing of the lands of Errol from the family may be thought to help out the anticipated catastrophe.

NOTE E, page 21.

Mr. Chalmers, the author of the "Caledonia," and others after him, do not believe in our tradition, notwithstanding all the *proofs* that remain in existence of its perfect authenticity. It is very uncivil of any prying antiquarian not to believe a good story. For our part, we believe every thing that is pleasant to read or tell, and *shall* believe it; and the *will* is the better part of faith, as all men know. Besides, to elevate the argument above the occasion—for all moral or pleasurable purposes, *impression* is the thing; and impression, when once made, is little affected one way or another by questions as to fact, when the mind is satisfied; especially as it is so often found that fable and fancy are better and more agreeable than hard-featured truth.

We are not willing to part with the tradition of the Hays; and we therefore argue, with the annotators of Buchanan, and with even Mr. Chalmers himself in another part of his book, that tradition is always founded on *something*; that where it is feasible, and supported by existing monuments, it is likely to be true; and that, if we reject it, we reject the chief foundation of early history. That there was a battle fought at the place called Loncarty, is proved from the tumuli still observable on the field, and the quantities of human bones mingled with spear heads and other remains of ancient weapons that have been from time to time dug up among these tumuli. And the truth of the story of the falcon is pretty well attested by the existence of the stone on which it is said to have alighted, and the transmission from age to age of an inci-

dent which is little likely to have been the invention of a rude people.

The genealogists, however, copying from one another, assert (the more positively that they know nothing on the matter); that the Hays did not come into Britain until the twelfth century, along with the followers of William the Conqueror, although Chalmers only uses a "probably" in speaking of this; and, on the authority of an old charter, sets down, that the first of the name *appearing on Scottish record* was William de Hay—or, as Douglas spells it, Haya—who was settled in Lothian, and became *pincerna domini Regis*—king's butler, or cup-bearer to Malcolm IV. This William died about 1170, but having married a sister of Ranulph de Sules, Lord of Liddisdale, his office of pincerna passed into the Soulis family, although his eldest son inherited the joint lands.

The heir of this baron, called also William de Haya, carried on the direct line of the Hays of the middle parts; but it was his brother Robert from whence sprung the earls and marquesses of Tweeddale, as well as the ancient lords of Yester, and the Hays of Locherart. The second William, chief of the house, was the frequent companion of William the Lion, and had the honour to be one of the hostages for him, upon his being liberated from an English prison by Henry II. in 1174.

During this period, however, says Chalmers, "there were other *Hays* in Scotland;" and we take leave to argue, with some authorities, in defence of our tradition, that the Hays first proprietors of Errol were originally a Dutch family, and that the name was probably Haig (or as like it as may be), from the town of that name. Chalmers, however, on the authority of his charter, makes

William the Lion give Errol with its pertinents in the carse of Gowrie, to William de Haya, the second above mentioned; although there is no reason why that property might not have been in the family before, or the present might merely be a confirmation of the right.

Antiquarians and peerage writers have little reason, however, to dogmatise upon the subject of the origin of this family, as appears from various documents which have by enquiry come into our hands, but which can hardly be noticed here. To a book of poems, but little known, published some years ago by James Hay Allan, Esq., a highland gentleman of talent, and considerable acquaintance with the manners and antiquities of the North, there is appended some curious notes, among which is one giving such an account of the real origin of the Hays as is well worthy to be put against the *ipse dixit* of the antiquarians. This account purports to be taken from a MS. history of that family to which he refers, but where he found it he does not inform us. We extract the note entire, as he gives it, for the information of such as take an interest in these enquiries:—

“ Mac Garadh,” he says, is the ancient name of the Hays. It is of genuine Gaelic origin, and was given first to the family in allusion to the celebrated action by which he raised himself from obscurity. It is very expressive of the circumstance: its literal signification is a dike or barrier, and was given to the ancestor of the Hays for his conduct at the battle of Loncarty, when he stood between the flying Scots and the victorious Danes like a wall or barrier of defence.

“ The reason of the loss of the original appellation in after-times, and that it was not perpetuated in the sub-

sequent surname of the family, must be sufficiently evident to those who are acquainted with the history of hereditary designations. Surnames did not come into use in England before the time of the Conqueror, and their introduction in Scotland was at a date a little subsequent. The name of Garadh was given to the ancestors of the Hays about one hundred and fifty-six years before, and had not, therefore, been subsequently retained by his descendants as an individual designation, but was only used generally as the name of the whole race, as Clann na Garadh, and particularly as the patronymic of the chief, who was designated Mac Mhic Garadh Mor, and Sgithan Dearg, the son of the son of Garadh-of the red shields.

" At the time, therefore, of the adoption of surnames, the appellation of Garadh had grown into antiquity, and there were also other reasons which still more forcibly actuated in its neglect. In the reign of Mac Beath, there were but two brothers of the direct descendants of Garadh; and during the troubles of that tyrant's usurpation, the younger 'being right bald and stalwart of heart,' went into Normandy, where he married the daughter and heiress of one of the barons of the dukedom.

" Surnames had by this time become partially in use on the Continent, and in his domiciliation in Normandy, the descendant of Garadh was desirous of adopting a name which should conform to the language and usage and language of the country, and at the same time perpetuate the memory of his origin. For this purpose he assumed the name of De la Haye, which is a sufficiently

literal translation of Garadh; the first signifying a hedge or fence, the latter a dike or barrier.

"In the reign of Malcolm Cean Mor," continues the same authority, "the son of the first de la Haye was one of the warriors who accompanied William of Normandy into England. Some time after the Conquest, he made a journey into Scotland to visit his uncle, the chief of the Clan na Garadh, then grown to a very advanced age, and without children. During this visit the old chief died; and there being no other heir, De la Haye was declared his successor. From this time he abandoned the service of William, residing wholly in Scotland; and having refused to return to the English dominions during the subsequent quarrel with King Malcolm concerning the protection of the Saxons, he incurred the resentment of William, and was forfeited of all his Norman estates. From this period the name became hereditary to the descendants of Garadh, and the old appellation dropped into oblivion."

The further account given by this gentleman of these early times, may be thought by many important; and is succinct and well-expressed as matter of history. To the civilising policy of this Malcolm, and still more afterwards of David the First, in inviting into Scotland so many Norman chieftains, whose fathers had come to Britain with William the Bastard, and which chieftains became the founders of so many of our great Scottish families, we shall hereafter have occasion to allude. "But the Gaelic having," continues Mr. Hay Allan, "been neglected at court, and broken by the vast intercourse of foreigners, gradually wore into disuse, and was at length

entirely superseded by the Saxon. The ancient Celtic names fell with the language in which they had arisen ; the fashionable appellations of foreigners obtained without rivalry ; and nearly at the same period appeared the De Campbells, the De la Hayes, the De Bruses, the De Ruthvyns, the Frasiers, the De Boyds, and many others, who either adopted in a foreign country a foreign appellation, or sprung by one side of the house from the adventurous warriors of the continental chivalry.

“ The destruction of the Scottish records by Edward I.; the dispersion, at the Reformation, of the Carthusian library in Iona ; and the loss of the Stirling papers carried into England by General Monk, have deprived us of all deeds or other documental evidence of the family of Hay while it bore the name of Mac Garadh ; and for this reason *their legal and chartulary history is confined to the Saxon records* ; and, as these are no older than the Conquest, this, coupled with the French construction of the surname, gave rise to the erroneous belief, expressed by Douglas and others, that the family was of *Norman* and *Italian* extraction.

“ The same accidents and the same fatality have injured the history, and obscured the origin, of the Whymses, and several other houses of Celtic derivation.”

But though Mr. Hay Allan omits to tell us in whose possession the MS. history now is, we cannot doubt of its existence; for he has printed in his book a war-song of the family, called “ The gathering of the Hays,” which, he says he copied from an odd leaf or fragment, which he found pasted into that history. The slogan song begins in the following stirring manner, and the whole,

accompanied as it was on the bagpipe by the pibroch of the clan, gives a good idea of what must have once been the effect of such words and music:—

“ Mac Garadh ! Mac Garadh ! red race of the Tay,
 Ho ! gather, ho ! gather like hawks to the prey :
 Mac Garadh, Mac Garadh, Mac Garadh come fast,
 The flame’s on the beacon, the horn’s on the blast.
 The standard of Errol unfolds its white breast,
 And the falcon of Loncartie stirs in her nest :
 Come away — come away — come to the tryste —
 Come in, Mac Garadh from east and from west.”

The picture of the charge is almost terrific:—

“ Mac Garadh is coming ! like stream from the hill,
 Mac Garadh is coming, lance, claymore, and bill :
 Like thunder’s wide rattle,
 Is mingled the battle,
 With cry of the falling, and shout of the charge;
 The lances are flashing,
 The claymores are clashing,
 And ringing the arrows on buckler and targe !”

The transcriber of this song states that some stanzas of it, as the above, &c. are very ancient, and others are quite modern — that scraps of it he has heard sung by old people in Perthshire — and that the old war-cry of the Hays was “ Haleu Mac Garadh ! ” — See *Bridal of Caolchairn, &c.* by James Hay Allan, Esq. Note, p. 334, &c.

But to return to our own historical sketch :—
 It was during the glorious struggle of the deliverer

Bruce, that the Hays who lived in his days distinguished themselves for noble patriotism for their depressed country, and romantic attachment to their heroic king; Gilbert de la Haye having been appointed one of the regents of the kingdom during the minority of Alexander III., and Nicholas de la Haye, then of Errol, being one of the nominees of Bruce to the throne of Scotland. Gilbert and Hugh, the sons of the latter, being also at his romantic coronation by the Countess of Buchan, and following him in his efforts to resist Pembroke and Percy, who had now marched as far as Perth; at the brave and disadvantageous struggle of Methven wood Hugh de la Haye was taken prisoner by the English, and Bruce, with his remaining followers, was driven to the mountains.

Here, along with the Earl of Athol, the young and gallant Sir James Douglas, Sir Neil Campbell, Edward Bruce the brother of the king, and many others, as well as several ladies who chose to share the danger of their lords in this wild hiding-place, Gilbert de la Haye, the remaining brother, encountered with his king and his brave companions all the perils and toils of that remarkable campaign. Not to dwell upon the details of these stirring times, it was for his services during Bruce's struggle for independence that the grateful hero raised Gilbert de la Haye (as the name was then spelt) to the dignity of hereditary high constable of Scotland, which is held by the Earls of Errol until the present day.

It was James II., however, who, for services rendered, created Errol into an earldom, adding that title to the office of constable united in the head of the house; and from this noble stock, says Chalmers, spring the Hays

Earls of Kinnoul, Hay Lord Becolie and Earl of Carlisle, Hay of Leyes, Hay of Pitfour, Hay of Renfield, Hay of Inchoch, and many others.

This sketch must necessarily take in but few facts, and omit altogether any notice of the subsidiary branches of this family. Francis, the eighth earl, adhering to the catholic religion, as did most of the heads of the ancient families, joined with the Earls of Crawford, Huntley, and Bothwell, in a rebellion against James V.'s government in 1589, and in 1592 Errol was committed prisoner to the castle of Edinburgh on a charge of "papistry" and a treasonable correspondence with Spain. See Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, Part II. Notwithstanding that the Earl and Huntley were released from this trouble, refusing to decamp from the kingdom, they raised a formidable army of their adherents, and defeated the royal army of 7000 men at Strathaven, commanded by the Earl of Argyle. The circumstances of their case of rebellion, however, must have been peculiarly excusable; for, on the king's advancing against them, he granted them permission to go abroad, upon their giving security that they should neither return without his licence, nor engage in any new intrigues against the protestant religion, or the peace of the kingdom.

This earl, who was married to a Douglas of the Morton branch, as also to two Stuarts, one the daughter of the then Earl of Athol, and the other of the celebrated Regent Moray, appears, notwithstanding his rebellion, to have been a man highly regarded both by his king and his own dependants; and the former gave him permission to return to Scotland after an absence of only two years. Afterwards, in 1604, he was one of the Commissioners nominated by Parliament to treat of a union with Eng-

land. "He was," says Sir Robert Douglas, "a truly noble man, of a great and courageous spirit, who had great troubles in his time, which he stoutly and honourably carried; and now, in favour, died in peace with God and man, and a loyal subject to the king, to the great grief of his friends." One act of this earl ought not to be passed over. Dying at Slains, his noble castle in Aberdeenshire, which stands on a picturesque precipice overhanging the sea, he gave directions, on his death-bed, that, instead of the gorgeous funeral intended for him, he should be buried privately in the church of that place, and that the calculated expense of a showy "earthing up" might be distributed to the poor and needy of the neighbourhood. This was done amid blessings and prayers for his soul, and his memory is held in corresponding reverence even until this day.

The son of this nobleman, who acted as high constable of Scotland at the coronation of Charles I., though bred up in the protestant religion, appears to have been of a very different disposition; for, pleased with show and expense, he lived in such splendour, that he involved himself in debt, and was obliged to sell his ancient paternal lordship of Errol, granted to his ancestors, says Douglas, "by King William the Lion, and the lands thereunto annexed." The son of this nobleman, namely, Gilbert, the tenth earl, having no male issue, the title and property fell in to the Hays of Killour; and in the early part of last century, the title devolving on a female, namely, Mary, Countess of Errol in her own right, who married Alexander Falconer, of Newton, second son of Lord President Falconer, the countess, at the coronation

of George II., claimed to act by deputy as high constable of Scotland, and the Duke of Roxburgh was appointed to officiate for her ladyship on that occasion. Lady Margaret Hay, who succeeded this lady, having married James, fifth Earl of Linlithgow and Callendar, and that nobleman *going out* in the fifteen, his estates were attainted; so Lady Ann Livingston, the surviving daughter, having obtained a lease of her father's attainted estate at a low rent, married William Boyd, the celebrated Lord Kilmarnock, who was beheaded in 1746, for his attachment to the house of Stuart.

The history of the latter unfortunate nobleman is well known; and if it be true, as is generally alleged, that he was induced to "go out" in the forty-five chiefly by the instigation of his lady, as well as that of his grand aunt, the old Countess of Errol, wife of President Falconer, then alive, the case is remarkable of a house being divided within itself; for, while the father and his *second* son, namely, the Honourable Charles Boyd, were engaged for the young Pretender, his eldest son, namely, James, Lord Boyd, held a commission from George II. in the twenty-first foot, and William, the third son, was in the royal navy, and on board Commodore Barnet's ship, at the period of his father's execution. His brother Charles, above-mentioned, after the battle of Culloden, fled into Arran, the ancient territory of the Boyds, and among its wild mountains managed to conceal himself for a whole year. Fortunately finding a chest of medical books, the refugee occupied himself in the study of them so effectually, that he acquired considerable skill in physic; and, escaping to France, is said to have practised medicine on the Continent for twenty years, after which he returned to Scotland, and, living for a time in the family castle of Slains, in

Aberdeenshire, died at Edinburgh, in 1785, after marrying a lady of the name of Haliburton, daughter of an Edinburgh citizen.

James, Lord Boyd, above mentioned, claiming his father's forfeited estate, the claim was sustained by the House of Lords, in 1751: in 1758, he succeeded his grand-aunt as fourteenth Earl of Errol; and in three years after, his lordship officiated at the coronation of George III. as hereditary high constable of Scotland. Of this there is an anecdote that is worth recording. Neglecting to pull off his cap on the king's entrance into Westminster Hall, some of the bystanders gave him notice of his duty: on finding his error, Lord Boyd confusedly pulled off his cap, and apologised to the king for his unconscious negligence and seeming disrespect. But the good-natured monarch entreated him to be covered as before, and condescendingly intimated that he looked on his presence at such a solemnity as a very peculiar honour.

The personal appearance of this nobleman, particularly when dressed in his constable's robes, is described as remarkably handsome and imposing. "His stature," says Dr. Beattie, in a letter to Mrs. Montague, "was six feet four inches, and his proportions most exact. His countenance and deportment exhibited such a mixture of the noble and graceful, as I have never seen united in any other person. He often put me in mind of an ancient hero; and I remember Dr. Johnson was positive that he resembled Homer's character of Sarpedon;" and Sir William Forbes, who introduces the above into his Life of Beattie, adds, "Were I desired to specify the man of the most graceful form, the most elegant, polished, and popular manners which I have ever known in my long

intercourse with society, I should not hesitate to name James, Earl of Errol."

But when the qualities of the mind and the virtues of the heart and disposition corresponded with such an exterior, what a truly noble personage we have before us! His manners, says the same authority, were "wonderfully agreeable;" he was "a most affectionate and attentive parent, husband, and brother; elegant in his economy; somewhat expensive, yet exact and methodical. He exerted his influence as a man of rank and a magistrate in doing good to all in his neighbourhood. In a word, he was adored by his servants, a blessing to his tenants, and the darling of the whole country;" and his death, which took place at Callendar House, in the 53d year of his age, is spoken of as "a great loss to his country, and a matter of unspeakable regret to his friends." Such a character, united to such high station, forms altogether a picture of human nature truly enviable.

Two sons of this nobleman were successively Earls of Errol; of the latter of whom, William Hay Carr, the present Earl, is the second son. The Earl is, therefore, the sixteenth Earl of Errol, and twenty-first high constable of Scotland.

On the privileges and estimation of this latter peculiar title, the reader may possibly have some curiosity. We therefore, subjoin the following observations, professionally given by Philip Wood, in his "Annotations on Sir Robert Douglas."

"As constable of Scotland," he says, "the Earl of Errol is, by birth, the first subject in the kingdom, after the blood royal; and, as such, hath a right to take place of every hereditary honour. The chancellor and consta-

ble of England do, indeed, take precedence of him, but these are only temporary honours, to which no man can lay claim by birth; so that, *by birth*, the Earl of Errol ranks, *without a doubt*, as the first subject in Great Britain, next to the princes of the blood royal." — Vol. i. p. 556. note.

* * * * *

Of traditional poetry illustrative of the history of the Hays, we have met with little besides the known ballad, beginning —

" Errol is a bonny place,
It stands upon a plain," &c.

And although, in ancient times, ladies of the highest rank busied themselves in employments which those of modern times would not deign to superintend, or even to have it supposed that they had any knowledge of; yet we doubt if the ballad poet was well acquainted with his subject, when he puts the following lines, however interesting for their quaint descriptiveness, in the mouth of any of the countesses of Errol. The lady, as the ballad states, is sadly discontented because she is childless; and, in her vexation, is supposed to murmur thus:—

" What needs I wash my apron,
Or drie it upon a door?
What needs I eek ? my petticoat
Hangs even down afore.

" What needs I wash my apron,
Or hang it upon a pin ?
For lang will I gae but and ben,
Ere I hear my young son's din."

But if the Countess of Errol could wash an apron for herself, and hang it upon a door, it is to be remembered that Queen Penelope was an industrious weaver; and the daughter of Jacob, who was, at least, a prosperous Palestine *laird*, could go to the well herself to draw water. But that was in the good old times, when ladies were of some service; and the countess would not have grudged her work if she only had had a son to give her more to do. So, being "very unhappy, indeed," she totally ran off from her lord; or, more literally speaking, *deserted the diet*, notwithstanding a daily invitation, as in the Aberdeen rhyme:—

“ Seven years on Errol’s table
There stands clean dish and speen;
And every day the bell is rung,
Cries, Lady, come and dine.”

* * * * *

One of the most remarkable men of the Hays’ name was the celebrated favourite of James I., who created such envy of the Scots among the English nobility. This was James Lord Hay, Baron of Sawley, in England, first advanced to his baronage *without* a seat in the House of Lords. He was made master of the king’s wardrobe, and afterwards created Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle, and sent ambassador to the French and other courts.

The chief reason of Lord Hay’s being employed on these embassies, was, besides his acknowledged abilities, his fine person, and extraordinary disposition to magnificence in dress and style of living. “He was,” says Granger, “princely in his entertainments, magnificent in his dress, and splendid in his retinue.” The story of his

having his horse shod with silver, when he made his public entry into Paris, is well known. "It is probable," adds Granger, in referring to the fact, "that the shoes were purposely slightly fastened, for the more ostentatious display of his vanity, especially as a smith went in the procession with a bag of horse-shoes of the same metal, for a supply."

Nor was it merely by the richness of his apparel, and the pomp of his retinue, that the Earl of Carlisle excited the envy of the English and French nobles of his time. His entertainments were on a scale commensurate with his exterior grandeur, for he had pies baked full of perfumed meats, of such extraordinary size and richness as to excite the wonder even of the luxurious French. It was part of the boasted kingcraft of the cunning James to endeavour, by means of the ostentatious vanity of this lord, to dazzle foreign courts into respect for his government. But they are seldom successful who calculate too far on the meaner passions of human nature; so the ambassador, with all his splendour, was often treated with studied contempt. Prince Maurice, for one, as is related, having received intelligence that the English "ambassador and his retinue were to dine with him, called for the bill of fare, which was intended for the ordinary course of his table that day. Finding a pig, among other meats, and knowing the Scottish aversion to that animal, the prince ordered two pigs to be dressed instead of one, without any other addition. This was an intended affront, as well to the king as to his ambassador; for James's hatred to swine's flesh was proverbial. The opprobrious pig was, therefore, the occasion of much laughter at this time."

The profusion of James, in the embassy alluded to, is astonishing, when his own poverty is considered. The

dresses of this nobleman were the theme of ample description by the writers of the time. How he supported this extravagance is not well known, saving that James, in order to uphold him in it, procured him for his wife the only daughter and heiress of Lord Denny, the greatest match, as we are told, of that time. The Earl of Holland was the only man about the court who could vie with the magnificent Earl of Carlisle; and when the two, as appointed, espoused Henrietta Maria, then Infanta of Spain, in the heyday of the Potosi mines, they were each “clothed in beaten silver.”

Aside from this peculiarity, however, the Earl of Carlisle was an able and sensible man. His passion for dress and feasting continued almost to the last moment of his life, even when he knew that he was given over by his physicians. He died on the 25th of April, 1636.

One of the most gallant and accomplished cavaliers of this family, however, was the well known Sir Francis Hay, of Dalgety. A faithful follower of Montrose in his unfortunate career, he was taken prisoner with him at his last fatal battle, and condemned to the same terrible fate. Refusing, on the scaffold, as a good Roman catholic, the attendance of the presbyterian clergy, he was not permitted the consolations of his own form of faith in his dying moments; and yet he kissed the axe of the headsman, avowed his fidelity to the king, and died like a soldier.

Several persons of this respected family have distinguished themselves even in antiquarian literature. The MSS. collected by Father Richard Augustin Hay, once a canon of St. Généviève, at Paris, and prior of St. Pierremont, and afterwards of Drumboot in Scotland, an intimate

of the well-known Lord Auchinleck, at the beginning of last century, were thought an acquisition worthy of purchase for the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, where they now are. Father Hay is also author of some curious particulars regarding the Templars, some collections in family history, an account of churches, monasteries, and "devout places," and other works. There is also Alexander Hay, the well-known historian of the antiquities of Chichester; and William Hay, the translator of Martial's Epigrams, &c.

* * * * *

What branch of the Hay family settled in the south of Ireland we have no means of knowing; but they being still strongly attached to the catholic religion, the first of them probably took refuge there during the troubles that preceded the Reformation in Scotland. One of the most prominent of them, of late years, was the well-known Edward Hay, long secretary to the Catholic Association: a better-tempered man, or one who could imbibe a more capacious skinful of claret or whisky punch, never stretched a leg under Irish mahogany. Mr. Hay, however, was almost too good-natured and open of mind for some of the society with whom he was associated; and, though his elder brother had been hanged in the troubles of 1798, was neither so violent nor so wild as several of the others. There is a story, however, of another brother of Mr. Hay's, who, although the whole family lay under the heavy ban of government suspicion, was then on service against the rebellious part of his countrymen, as a captain in a dragoon regiment, that probably deserves to be told here, though partly narrated in several of the publications of the time. It is this:—

* * * *

During the sanguinary skirmishes that took place in Ireland, upon the first assault of Wexford by the rebels, the forward bravery of Captain Hay led him into circumstances which ended in his being made prisoner by the enemy. At this period quarter was seldom given or taken, at least for more than a day, on the part of the rebels, and only then that they might despatch their prisoners with more aggravation of cruelty and degradation. From the manner in which Captain Hay's family, however, was regarded in the neighbourhood, his life was spared; and this circumstance, together with what afterwards followed, became the cause of a charge of treason against him.

When the captain got back to his troop, he became one of the gallant band who so bravely defended the town of Enniscorthy; but the approaches of the rebels, in the celebrated battle of Vinegar Hill, had been so regular, and their tactics so superior to their ordinary proceedings, that it was broadly suggested by some of the loyal yeomen that their plans must have been given by Captain Hay, and that, in fact, he must have been their willing prisoner. For these suspicions a court martial was appointed to try him for desertion and high treason, the fatal proceedings of which were only suspended by the bloody attack on the town immediately after.

Agitated by the various terrors of these circumstances, Captain Hay had little care for his own life, compared with that of one in whose fate and safety he was deeply interested. This was a Miss Moor, daughter of a merchant in Wexford, to whom, with all the gallantry of a soldier and the warmth of an Irishman, the captain had

become strongly attached. Fleeing from her native city, during the horrors of these times, accompanied only by a Mrs. Ogle, wife of the member for the county, the ladies, unattended by any protector, took refuge in the town of Enniscorthy ; Miss Moor, in particular, thinking herself safe in any place where the captain was near.

Enniscorthy, though once one of the strongest places in the south, where the English, under the redoubted Strongbow, originally established themselves, is now without fortification ; and, beautifully situated on the banks of the Slaney, forms almost the base of the celebrated Vinegar Hill, which rises, round and picturesque, out of the plain behind it. The horrors of this frightful time were only beginning ; for, led by the celebrated Father Roche, the priest, the rebels, with wild shouts, came close to the town ; and a succession of scenes took place, perhaps unparalleled in history for obstinate valour and ferocious barbarity. No quarter was given or taken on either side : the rebels, with their green flags, came up in confused masses, and with wild cries, on the English troops ; and as often as they were repulsed, and made to run, Father Roche, a man of great height and proportionate muscle, in a squalid dress, covered with blood and the mud of the field, and with a countenance described as ruffianly and terrific, rallied them again and again, and with blasphemous appeals to the God of battles, brought them afresh to the charge.

The comparative handful of royal troops fought long and obstinately ; but at length, overpowered by numbers, and wearied with their persevering charges, they were ultimately forced within the town ; and now a scene took place which well might appal stronger hearts than those of

the poor ladies, who all this while suffered unspeakable terrors. As soon as the rebels got into the street, furiously seeking for lighted brands, they not only massacred the fleeing wretches, but set fire to the town in every direction, in order that the relics of the royal troops who were hemmed in beyond it might be completely destroyed.

The feelings of Captain Hay, all this while, and in particular when he saw the street in which his beloved and her friend had taken refuge fired on both sides by order of Father Roche, it were not easy to describe. The moment was the last, and the case was desperate. Having a powerful horse, in which he could trust, he leaped upon it, dashed through a crowd of savage incendiaries into the midst of the burning street, determined to rescue her, or perish with her in the flames.

But how to leave his horse while he sought his friend, as the terrified animal reared, and snorted, at the objects of its fear, he could not decide. Jamming it, at length, in a narrow passage, he managed to fasten it, and soon found the ladies fainting in distraction, and giving themselves up for lost. There was no time for expressions of joy when hurrying them down to the street : he begged of them, for God's sake, to be cool, and exert all their energies, while he should try to save them : but what was he to do ? for there were two of them besides himself, and here he had but one horse, their only hope, while the flames from both sides of the street were fast approaching them, and the savage shouting without told too well what was going forward. Lifting Miss Moor in his arms, he at once set her on the shoulder of the animal: conjuring her to hold firm, he next lifted Mrs. Ogle on behind the saddle, while he sprang on also between them;

and thus, three on one horse, he determined, if possible, to make his way through the fire and the rebels.

When they got again among the smoke and the heat, the burdened animal refused to go forward, the sight in front was so truly appalling : but it was now life or death to them all ; and the gallant Hay looked forth into the flames with determined bravery, only still exhorting the ladies, who clung to him, to be firm and courageous. Thrusting the spurs into the very ribs of his horse, he dashed into the flames, while the fire and smoke almost blinded him, and the heat was so intolerable that the foaming animal stood still at one point, trembling with terror, and again refusing to move. The ladies screamed, feeling the scorching fire, yet the determined captain still urged the horse forward, while the hissing flames twined round their heads, and the choking smoke almost rendered them insensible ; but it was the falling brands of burning timber, and large sparks of hot flame, that was most dreadful to the ladies, and most terrific to the poor animal, as they struggled through the fire. At length, by incredible efforts on the captain's part, and great resolution on that of his fair charge, they cleared, though severely scorched, the burning town ; and when the rebels at that part saw a horse gallop out from the midst of the flames, carrying three persons, with looks of terrified excitement, they gave way on every side, and even set up shouts of admiration at so much bravery.

The joy and gratitude of the ladies, to their gallant deliverer, when they found themselves safe, though severely scorched, may be partly conceived. They and their friends loaded him with blessings; and that he married Miss Moor afterwards, we have no doubt, if it were for

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no other reason but to make the drama complete. On this latter point, however, we have no information; but we know that Captain Hay's bravery, on this occasion, removed all the suspicion to which he had been subjected, and he was restored to the full confidence of his regiment, and had the applause of all.

THE PRIORS OF LAWFORD;

A STORY OF THE DOMINIE.

CHAPTER I.

ONE long summer's day I had been travelling on, in my usual pedestrian manner, through a series of sweeping yet solitary valleys, such as may be found, as he goes, by any by-road topographer, towards the eastern and southern extremities of Scotland. The country was sufficiently romantic to interest the fancy of a wanderer like myself; but as the sun declined towards evening, I had plodded on for several miles without seeing a human face, and I began to long exceedingly to meet with some habitation, where I might enjoy a little comfort and rest. In this part of the world I was a perfect stranger, and now began to get uneasy; for I was spent and weary, and even the song of the

blackbird, which still echoed through the woods, failed to bring its usual refreshment to my spirit.

Much farther I had not proceeded, when, buried "cosily" among the upland woods, and partly straggling down a green slope, a sweet romantic village came unexpectedly into my view, and delighted my fancy with pleasing ideas of what I might find within it. As I drew near, the small dwellings seemed so quaintly built, and huddled together with a look of such simple sociality,—the place seemed altogether such "a rest and be thankful" station, for those who, like myself, chose to wander to and fro in the world, to see what it might contain, as well as to chase away sad thoughts, that the contemplation brought me involuntary comfort, from the impressive conviction, that, bad as the world is, there is still to be found in it much peace, purity, and happiness.

As I came on towards the village, the hour of eight struck sonorously from the bell of the tower, and presently it began to toll an even-

ing chime, which broke pleasingly the surrounding stillness, and sounded away among the valleys, with a musical and murmuring tinkle. This was a gracious sound to my reviving spirit, as I musingly entered within the long street, and observed the youngsters come out from the doors up and down, to enjoy the outside sociality of the summer's night; for, in truth, every thing had a happy and contented look; and I thought that even the jolly red face of the Marquis of Granby, that was painted on the sign-board of the decent inn, seemed to grin upon me a hearty and inviting welcome.

I was soon within the old-fashioned hostelry, and, seating myself in a large arm-chair of a comely parlour, I drew a long breath, and looked upwards, giving thanks for the mercies thus pleasantly and conveniently thrown in my way. At the same instant I was attended by a clean-looking woman, namely, the landlady herself, who came to offer me her best refreshment. A single glance showed me what sort of person the landlady was; and, in five minutes

after, my mind was made up to pass a whole day in her house, perhaps more, to get acquainted with this interesting village of Hillington.

“Who are the principal people about this neighbourhood, mistress?” I enquired of the curtseying landlady.

“The principal family hereabout, sir,” she answered, kindly, “live down the water in Lawford Holm; but it would be a long tale to tell you all about them,” added the woman, mysteriously.

“And who preaches in that fine old church of yours, mistress?”

“That’s just what I wish to tell you, sir,” said the woman: “Mr. Kinloch, the old minister, seems to have but a short time to live; but his successor is so much beloved, that his name is in every one’s mouth here. May be, sir, as you are a stranger, you are come to the placing.”

“What placing, mistress? I have not heard of it.”

“Mr. Bannatyne, the new minister, is to be

placed on Wednesday, and this will be a great doing in Hillington."

"No doubt. But who lives in that ill-made square house among the trees, that I observed on the left hand, as I came into the village?"

"The laird of Glauderston, sir,—and his daughter is ——".

"The laird!" said I, surprised—"is an old acquaintance of mine: I was not aware that he lived here. But what were you going to tell of his daughter?"

"She is spoken of as the wife to be of the handsome young minister that's about to be placed in Hillington kirk—but, indeed ——"

"Indeed — what, mistress?"

"Oh, sir, she is a coarse creature."

"Nothing remarkable in that, mistress," I said: "coarse and fine are often spun together, in this world, for wiser reasons than I can make out. Marriages, they say, were once made in heaven, but that must have been long before my time."

"You are an observable man, sir," said the

woman : “ I wish you could stay to see the placing.”

“ Why to see that, mistress ?”

“ I cannot tell you, sir : but there is a lady — ”

“ Very likely. There is always a lady in every thing that is interesting. And what lady is it ?”

“ The lady of the Holm, sir. It’s not for me to talk to a stranger about her ; but, perhaps, you may hear something concerning this lady from the laird of Glaunderston. An observable man like you should not leave this country side without knowing something about the Priors of Lawford.”

“ Prior ? that will be the name of a family. An English name, I think it is.”

“ Yes, sir. A strange, and yet an admirable old family it is, and ever has been, long before the remembrance of living man ; although I cannot tell you about it what I would, at this present talking ; and then, sir, there is the young minister. I’ll tell you what it is, if that young gentleman ever couples himself with

Glaunderston's coarse daughter—but ye'll excuse me, there's a bell ringing in the wee parlour, and I'll be wanted;” — and with this, tripping out of the room, after a slight curtsy, the tantalising woman left me to ruminate over this imperfect information.

All the addition to her hint that I could afterwards obtain was, that Mr. Bannatyne, the said minister, was expected at Glaunderston House on the following day ; and thither I determined to walk, shortly after breakfast next morning ; for my mind was awakened about something, I knew not what.

Upon going to the laird's house, he was exceedingly pleased to see me, and introduced me to the old minister of the parish, whom he had hospitably invited to meet Mr. Bannatyne. The latter *did* arrive, just as the old gentleman and I were talking. Of the latter, however, to wit, the Reverend Mr. Kinloch, who had been minister of the parish for nearly forty years, I must first say a few words.

Contrary to what experience had taught me to expect in a common country clergyman, I

found the senior to be a man of general information and a gentlemanly spirit ; one whose comparative want of knowledge of the world, of which he was himself sensible, was well made up by the quality of his reading, and great natural shrewdness and sagacity of mind. I was just rejoicing inwardly over the value to his parish of such a man, in the character of its pastor, as well as to the inexperience of him who was to be his successor, when a coach stopped at the door, and Mr. Bannatyne, of whom we had been talking, accompanied by another clergyman, alighted, and joined our company.

The first glance I had of this remarked person, even his walking across the room, showed me that he had one advantage, of value both to himself and his charge, to wit, the birth and rearing of a gentleman ; and his conversation soon indicated that his mind set him above the usual peculiarities of his calling. But he was not a mere youth : his age might be four and twenty ; and his looks were certainly all that the talkative landlady of the inn had described.

Involuntarily he interested me, and I soon saw that here, as well as in the village, he was the idol of the general women, and the grand object, in particular, of the laird of Glauderston's red-haired daughter. This discovery I grudged at exceedingly, knowing that the unequal yoking together of the coarse and the fine in the world is none the better for its being often done, and becomes a root of bitterness from which grows up many bad shootings.

Though far from being troubled with itching ears, to make me a runner after popular preachers, yet, the obviously superior character of Mr. Bannatyne gave an interest to the ceremony of his being inducted, or "placed," which determined me to attend it on the following day. I had also a curiosity to see the assembled people of this romantic neighbourhood, and to observe in what manner a youth who had interested me so much would take upon himself so important a charge. In the morning, accordingly, I made ready in time; but before the ringing out of the second bell,

remembering the hints and half sentences of the talkative landlady, my curiosity was awakened to know something further, if possible, regarding the particular family of whom she spoke. When I called upon the good woman, however, I found, to my surprise, that her mouth had been completely closed to my enquiries, from some sudden consideration of publican prudence, in consequence, no doubt, of my taking up my abode with the laird of Glauderston.

"I'm in a public way, sir," she said, "and it's by the public I live: so it is not for me to keep a waggling tongue in my head, about the worthy gentles of this canny neighbourhood, among whom I earn my bit and my sup; but as you are an observable man, sir, and about to go to the placing, when you set yourself down in the laird's seat, just observe you a young lady in the green pew forntent you, wi' the broad scutcheon of arms on the pillar above her head."

"I'll mind what you say, mistress," replied I; "but tell me now, whose are the arms that

you speak of, and what is the reason of all this mystery."

" There is the kirk bell begun to ring, sir," she said, " and I must be going, although ye *be* a man of interrogation. But if ye would know what I wish you of this remarkable family, look at the lady that sits beneath the scutcheon. Ye'll ken her, sir, by her pretty fair face, and her skin as white as milk, an' her dark swelling eye that's never off the minister."

" Go on, mistress," said I, peremptorily, " speak out, if you be a woman."

" Then, sir, just do you watch the lady's face at the placing, and see how she looks at the trying questioning, and the denunciation, and the laying on of the hands, and the apostolic benediction, and the confirming prayer,— just observe the countenance of Rebecca Prior, and if you have an eye for a woman's thoughts, and can read the changes of a bonnie face, when the soul within kindles up under the cheek, and the heart beats because it daurna speak, ye 'll think of what I say."

The word of my reply was not ready at my tongue's end, when I looked up, and, behold, the woman was gone.

The church bell now sounded, as I wandered forth, with romantic effect over the neighbouring hills, and echoed away through the valleys below the town; so I joined the sober crowd that issued from the houses, and soon entering by the kirk stile, and passing the monuments of the ancient graveyard, I placed myself comfortably in the laird of Glaunderston's pew, anxious to witness the ceremony of the placing.

As the church filled with people, there entered by the door opposite to me, a tall, dark, remarkable-looking gentleman, accompanying a lady aged about twenty; and as she came forward in the passage, even before she had entered the seat under the scutcheoned pillar, I knew that she was the one whom I was given to watch.

There never was a female more worthy of observation, or one more likely to excite that sort of interest which belongs to the finer species of sexual character, and which is

"above and beyond" mere personal beauty. I do not mean to describe so well known a ceremony as the "placing" or consecration of a Scottish minister, after the austere forms of the Genevan presbyters. I intend only to speak briefly of what I observed regarding this peculiar lady, and in the demeanour of him who was the subject of the ceremony, on whom, at least, in the character of her spiritual instructor, and with all a maiden's modesty, were the eyes of the female intently riveted.

Her features, I could see at a glance, might be said to be perfect; and, what is more, they indicated that mixture of the lofty and the sentimental, which is always so interesting, and sometimes so awful, in the female character. Her skin was beautifully delicate; there was but little colour in her cheek; and though her hair tended to fair, her eyes were deeply dark and sparkling, their large pupils contrasting strikingly with the somewhat pallid, yet healthy, hue of her skin. But I had not yet seen her as I did before the ceremony was finished, nor was I able for a considerable

time, fully to understand the meaning even of what I saw.

Mr. Bannatyne demeaned himself during the whole of the ceremony with that modest good sense which, from previous observation, I certainly expected. But he did not go through this day's trial like one of the timber pillars that supported his pulpit. He did not hear and answer to the affecting charge of St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, without being moved, and that deeply, with the serious nature of the duties which he was now taking upon him. But it was the lady—the pale, poetical-eyed lady, that riveted my attention more and more. As I watched her during the exercises of this morning, I could have sworn that there was love for the man, burning at her heart, which mixed with, and received elevation from, her admiration of the pastor. Whenever, therefore, his speaking eye indicated that he was moved by the solemn things that were addressed to him, or that his own tongue uttered, she, who gazed in his countenance throughout, as only a woman can look into the soul of the

man whom she admires, seemed ready to burst out into sobs of audible emotion; but, pressing her lips hard together, to confine her feelings within her own breast, she only suffered the large drops to stream down her pale cheeks, or to stand like crystals glazing over the dark pupils of her eyes.

It was not to be supposed that, on a day like this, the look of the young minister should indicate any thing of reciprocity with the evident emotions of the lady. By the time, however, that the ceremony was finished, and that I had seen and heard all, my curiosity and interest were wound up to the highest pitch, to know something more of the two individuals, both of whom, in their supposed relations to each other and the world, had already made a deep impression on my mind. All was soon ended, and I went forth with the crowd, convinced, as well from what I observed, as from the hints of the landlady, that there was something to be known of no common nature regarding persons who severally so much interested me,

but of whose character and the peculiarity of their circumstances I was yet ignorant.

It was during my further sojourn in this secluded neighbourhood, and my subsequent journeyings to these parts, that I was enabled to pick up the particulars I have to tell regarding the old family of Lawford.

CHAPTER II.

ON the side of a rising ground, which slopes down into a pleasant hollow, or rather holm, as such a spot is named in Scotland, only a short mile from the village of Hillington, stood, at this period, an old-fashioned picturesque building, which, overlooking from the midst of the wood with which the slope was covered, the small streamlet or burn that meandered down in the hollow, was known from time immemorial by the name of the mansion of Lawford. The streamlet was also called by the same name, which, as its etymology intimates, eventually served to designate the whole neighbouring estate; and this ancient property has been, for more generations than could easily be traced, in the possession of a family who originally came from England, but who had long been familiarly known in the country by the general designation of the Priors of Lawford.

Of this ancient family, once pretty numerous, only two persons at this time remained to claim direct and near connection with it; and these two were somewhat strangely and, with respect to the world, solitarily situated. The one was a maiden, the only daughter now living of the last married male of the family. The other was the only brother of that person, who had died about a year ago, and of course the uncle of the maiden, still, also, unmarried; and these two persons lived together, in much seclusion, in the stately old mansion by Lawford burn. Neither the young lady nor the elderly gentleman were common characters, as was well known to such of the people in the neighbourhood as had sufficient perception to observe this; and it need not be added, that it was the niece of the tall dark-visaged gentleman who had so strongly interested me on the day of the placing.

There was not, probably, another person in the parish who had had the sagacity to observe what the landlady of the inn had observed and pointed out to me, in regard to some supposed

sentiment of Rebecca Prior towards Mr. Bannatyne, the minister. As for the young clergyman, he was perfectly a stranger to the existence of any thing of the kind, and very much so to the lady herself; for, though he had before this period once sat in her company, she had scarcely exchanged a word with him; and her behaviour had been so silent, and timid, and peculiar, both on that occasion and when he had noticed her among others in her pew at church, that she seemed to him more like a vowed and pledged nun, who had renounced the world and its pleasures, than “any mortal mixture of earth’s mould,” who lived and dwelt amongst us.

It was not from any romantic exaggeration of her beauty — which, in truth, needed no exaggeration — that Mr. Bannatyne took up this notion. It was simply an impression of character, regarding a lady of whom every one spoke in terms of the deepest respect, and with whom he had few expectations of making any acquaintance. At times, indeed, he felt a strong wish to have some intimacy with her and her

uncle; for when he came to be settled in the parish, the society he found, male or female, was extremely limited; and curiosity itself, with something like awe of the nun-like female, gradually heightened that sentiment. She seemed, however, to have taken, as he thought, something like dislike to himself; for, in subsequently meeting her at Lawford House, in consequence of her uncle's hospitality, her reserve became almost more marked than good breeding would warrant, until he began to fancy that she even tried to avoid him. Yet, at other times, afterwards, when she *did* enter into some distant conversation with him, her observations were so judicious and so tasteful — her very language indicated so much mental accomplishment, such unassuming refinement; and he thought her words were at times so penetrating in their meaning — even her voice seemed so musical — that he became interested concerning her to absolute absorption, and was momentarily flattered into an idea that she almost took a pleasure in his society.

Mr. Prior himself had taken an evident par-

tiality for the minister; and in the subsequent visits of the latter at Lawford House, as he involuntarily watched the countenance of Rebecca, she would again, at times, become unaccountably silent, as if she was careful to eschew further direct communication with him. But anon, as he talked to her uncle, her large eye would sparkle while watching his words; then she would gradually offer some remark, and join them, as if giving way to her feelings; when afterwards, suddenly checking herself, so soon as the conversation became serious or interesting, she would, upon some slight excuse, rise and leave the room.

This conduct, so unusual for one of her age, very much astonished Mr. Bannatyne. "What could her meaning be?" he often enquired of himself; for this was repeated several times, and under modifications of manner and circumstances so various, that he knew not what to think. Sometimes it deeply provoked his pride; and at others it excited feelings of a very different kind: for more than once the transient look that she cast on him.—her full expressive

eyes, as she rose to leave his company, had a meaning in their glance so despairingly sad, that it almost affected him to tears; and on these occasions, if eyes could speak, he thought hers seemed eloquently to beg of him to excuse her manner, to forgive her, and to take no offence at her behaviour. But, at such times, after Mr. Bannatyne was left alone with her uncle, the conversation of the worthy old gentleman appeared to him so tedious, and he himself became so abstracted, that both gentlemen would sit and observe each other for a time with a look of indefinite but subdued mystery.

Still the minister could not stay from the house, and the same scene was acted over and over again. The same dread of something unexpressed, seemed to be over all; and yet they could not live separate. Expressions occasionally dropped from the old gentleman also, and looks were exchanged between him and Rebecca, which filled the minister with a feeling so painful, that it was almost terrifying to himself; and yet, he knew not what was its exact meaning, or to what it tended. Some-

times now, as he sat and looked at them both, a sort of vague dread would come gradually over him, which he could not define, and which was associated with some notion or suspicion, for which there seemed to be no expression. Even the solitary and antiquated mansion of Lawford seemed now to his fancy to have something mysterious, if not terrific, about it; and as he went down thither in the winter evenings, the stream in the holm, as he crossed it, appeared to meander dark and dreary down the hollow, and the wind to moan sadly through the woods, as if warning him of some dismal tale that he dared not be told. At length, some slight incident occurred between him and Rebecca, which alarmed his pride, while it affected his feelings; and as he crossed the stream that night, on his return home, he determined, whatever it might cost him, to absent himself henceforth from this strange though fascinating family.

But now again, as he sat at home over his books after this, in his dull lodging in Hillington, he found that by staying away entirely

from his secluded friends, he was punishing himself much more than, in the moment of alarmed pride, he could have suspected; and began, like all candid minds, to think that there might be something in himself, or in the position of the lady, or in the nature of the case altogether, more than he knew of, which might form a good reason for that manner, to him, of which he complained. But even the society of Mr. Prior was of itself so desirable in this dull neighbourhood, that it was too much for him to deny himself the pleasure and advantage he might derive from it, on account of any unexplained fancy regarding a female living in his house, whose manner to himself might be perplexing, but of which there was no reason that he should take any particular notice. Besides, with Mr. Prior himself he felt that he was not yet half acquainted; and, as for the lady, though she did no more than pass out and in as they talked, her simple smile at her uncle's joke, and the penetrating gaze of her large dark eye (should she never deign even to speak to him), were, as he thought,

a positive delight, compared to the obtrusive chatter and freedom of the coarse daughter of M'Gilvray of Glaunderston.

"And more than all this," he added, to himself, as he paced the floor of his solitary study, "young men, as my venerable predecessor says, are disposed to be rash in their judgments, and dictatorial in their decisions, before they have time to know what is hidden under the external surface of things. Doubtless, I am to blame, in presuming to set up my own inexperienced pride, against the invaluable advantages, at my age, even of the instructive evils, that may arise out of intercourse with wise and accomplished people. It becomes me, as a teacher of others," continued he, "to feel, that I also am liable to misapprehension, to error, and folly. I will, this very evening, arise, and, in the repentant spirit which manly candour has often to exercise in life, seek one other interview, at least, with the venerable proprietor of Lawford."

Pursuing the train of the minister's reflections, it must here be added, that there are few

things more puzzling to sensitive persons in early life, than the occasional *manner* towards them, of those, whose good opinion they are anxious to deserve. This Mr. Bannatyne strongly felt on his new visit of the same evening at Lawford, particularly with reference to Rebecca Prior; for, though he had persuaded himself, that it was her uncle only he had gone to converse with, and that her behaviour, or notice of him, was of no manner of consequence; he found, to his uneasiness, that, whether it was curiosity, or whether it was pride, not only the words she addressed to him, but her minutest look, were now matters of increasing solicitude. Yet he would not seem to regard her, he thought; for, in fact, her presence was of no importance to him; and this ridiculous watching of the countenance, and pondering on the motives of a strange girl, would wear off as his curiosity came to be gratified; for, as to any more serious sentiment, that, of course, was out of the question.

The character of both these persons, as they appeared at this time to the anxious young

pastor, require, perhaps, a word of explanation. That of Mr. Prior, in particular, appeared to the young man odd and unaccountable in several respects. With a sportiveness of fancy, which seemed evidently to fit him for social enjoyments, and which occasionally showed itself through his habitual seriousness and taciturnity, he yet seemed systematically to exclude himself from the world, and to look with jealousy upon any intrusion into his habits, although what he called an intrusion was yet evidently felt to be a real relief. On some occasions, in the society of Mr. Bannatyne, Mr. Prior's conversation became, to our youth's surprise, even humorous and caustic; and when he contrasted this lightness, with the general strain of profound and didactic thought in which he usually indulged, and the instructive, though gloomy, speculations upon the condition of humanity, which made the staple of his earnestly delivered aphorisms, he was convinced that there was something hidden under all this, which it would require more

than ordinary penetration to find out or appreciate.

As to Rebecca, however, the minister observed, that whatever was peculiar regarding her, beyond her habitual expression of simple and resigned melancholy, consisted entirely in her behaviour to himself; for her conversation with her uncle was easy and sensible, besides maintaining a tone of graceful humility that was extremely seductive; and every movement of hers, and every arrangement of the household under her charge, indicated the most perfect taste and propriety.

Had the minister had less dignity of character, and used more freedom with others in the neighbourhood, the prying tattle of a country parish would soon have furnished him with certain particulars regarding the Priors of Lawford, which might have served as a cue to the explanation of all this. But, as it was, he could only trust to his own observations, and as these became more acute, and had more to feed upon, they became still more absorbing to his faculties, and their subjects more interest-

ing to his feelings. He saw an elderly gentleman without wife, child, brother, or sister, living in almost total seclusion, with no companion or society, but that of a thoughtful maiden of nineteen, the daughter of his deceased brother; who, in the very spring-time and beauty of youth and health, seemed also generally to abstract herself from all society but that of a gloomy and eccentric uncle, and to shrink from coming in contact with a world which would have hailed her presence with joy, and fed upon her smiles with rapturous admiration.

"What can be the meaning of all this?" he still enquired: "it is not natural for age to refuse honour, or beauty and youth to eschew admiration. There must be some fearful cause that compels the old to avoid society, that solace of life, and the young to choose pensiveness rather than joy, at the very period when the heart beats quick, when the blood is warm, and the romantic fancy travels over bright regions of imagined and anticipated felicity."

It was in vain for him to strive against the increasing anxiety of his curiosity, or whatever else the feeling might be called, which induced him to watch over Rebecca's manner in the way he was constrained to do. He saw, also, that she was aware of his constant and sensitive observation of her; and this seemed still more to increase his embarrassment; for whenever she caught herself joining the discursive conversation between her uncle and him, until she perhaps echoed some sentiment that Mr. Bannatyne had uttered, or joined her judgment to his with animated approbation, her countenance would again assume a strange expression of mental agony, as if she suddenly recollected some painful apprehension.

"There is some mystery of sorrow hanging over this family," he still murmured to himself, as he walked solitarily home from Lawford House, one night, in a mood of unusual gloom, "which all my observation cannot penetrate. In this world of strange mysteries, of various and hidden sources of sorrow — this darkling pilgrimage, wherein we still grope in such un-

certainty as to many deep enquiries concerning ‘being’s end and aim,’ I know that it is too true, that, in spite of appearances, and of all the coveted appliances and means which fortune seems to collect around her greatest favourites, for the momentary elation of the youthful heart, and for the strengthening of the deceptions of tantalising hope, still there will be found, according to the sombre meaning of the Italian proverb, to be ‘a skeleton in every house’ — a concealed cause of regret or of dread in every habitation, or in every heart. What can be the nature, or what the history, of that remorseless phantom that lurks among the recesses of the mansion of Lawford, and which cruelly poisons the cup of life to these gentle hearts? What can the name be of the skeleton fiend whose bare bones ever and anon seem to rattle some sound of dread or of horror to check the risings towards enjoyment of the sorrowful spirits in this secluded house? or whose fleshless arm points to some fearful index in nature, of some reserved woe in the future destiny of the family? By heavens! this

maiden shall draw aside to me the dark curtain that covers this terrific object, that I may be a sharer in her sorrow myself, or at least be enabled to bear some portion of her burden ! ”

About this period one or two trifling incidents took place between the minister and Rebecca, such as *will* happen in the course of an intercourse now becoming so constant, which had the effect of fairly drawing his attention to the state of his own feelings, and of opening his eyes to what he could no longer disguise from himself. It perhaps need hardly be added, that simple curiosity was now no longer the feeling of his mind regarding her. Admiration — increasing and deepening admiration — was, by this time, united to a more touching sentiment. Unsuppressable passion increased deep interest for its object, and rendered sympathy so intense as to be almost painful, until Rebecca Prior became the idol of his spirit, and the charm that awakened him to another existence. Still there was the secret, the apparent mystery, unopened, unsolved. Bannatyne had determined that she should

remove the curtain, and disclose the skeleton that caused her melancholy, and his own. But he had not yet the courage to ask her to do so. He was happy in her society each evening, and yet he was most miserable. Such is love !

CHAPTER III.

By this time, there was not a man (at least there certainly was not a woman) in the whole parish of Hillington, but whose mind was perfectly made up as to the present intentions, immediate measures, and whole future history, of their beloved young pastor. That he was shortly to be married to the heiress of Lawford had long been clearly seen: that he had fairly disappointed the laird of Glauderston's daughter was matter of no regret; and that he was to get such and such lands and plenishings with the last remaining daughter of the house of Lawford, was all fully understood and settled.

All this, however, was much more than a matter of mere gossip to the honest laird of Glauderston, and the female part of his family. The laird was disappointed, he was almost indignant; the lady was wroth, and thought herself wronged; the daughter was in a pet, and would have complained, only that no one in

Scotland ever prospers who dares to say ill of the minister.

But, in truth, had not the laird been a man whose expectations were formed more from his own wishes than the nature of things, he might have seen, from the first, what was seen by every body else around, that, though naturally anxious, like every well-meaning father, to obtain a comfortable settlement for his favourite daughter, yet the simple fact of Mr. Bannatyne's coming to be assistant minister in the neighbourhood, and accepting, for a time, the hospitality of his house, formed little ground for so extravagant an expectation as that he was shortly to have, in such near relationship, the fastidious and gentlemanly junior minister of Hillington. We can seldom, in this world, receive a gratification to ourselves, without, whether conscious of it or not, giving pain or offence to some other person; so the interesting visits of our clergyman to Lawford House were, without his suspecting it, carefully observed, and enviously felt, by the angry and disappointed family at Glauderston.

The idle gossip of his parishioners, however, had far outrun the truth, as to the prospects or the intentions of their pastor in the quarter where he visited; for, instead of the commonplace process of wooing and wedding, such as the ordinary world experience and expect, his mind, even amidst the pleasing excitement of passion, was, as before hinted, plunged into a sea of cares and fears, with which all who seek to enjoy the higher emotions of our nature seldom fail to be painfully tried. When he came to see fully into the state of his own mind, and to conclude, in candid self-examination, that, reason as he might, from this time forth earthly happiness and Rebecca Prior were with him inseparably connected, he, in the spirit of manly sincerity, resolved at once, that, in spite of all considerations arising out of their respective conditions in life, and in the face of that inexplicable manner which at times had given him so much uneasiness, he would declare to her the passion he no longer could control, and would learn from her own lips all that he so anxiously wished to know.

But, no sooner had he come to this ultimate determination, and sought to end his anxiety by carrying it into effect, than he found that Rebecca had, with all a woman's tact, long penetrated his intention; for she avoided every thing in the shape of an opportunity for his meeting her out of the presence of her uncle, and, when accidentally left with him, she would look round her, for an instant, in apparent alarm; then, rising and excusing herself, would steal out of the room, as if some sudden dread had just come over her. And yet she did not scruple to converse with him as she had done at the more early period of their intercourse; indeed, so evidently pleased were her uncle and herself always to see him, and so warm were the constant invitations of each to favour them with his society, that he seemed to be now almost one of the family, and could converse with both upon every subject but the one that was nearest to his own heart.

Now, also, the reserve that Rebecca had at first shown to him had in a great measure died away, or had at least assumed a different cha-

racter; but still the opportunity — the wished-for and yet dreaded opportunity of speaking to her that one word — of asking her that one question — was always denied him, so that the very pleasure which her society gave him was almost a torture in his present uncertainty. As he farther thought of the possible result of such a communication, after all these happy evenings, the idea at times tended to deepen his distraction of mind, and make his perplexity almost intolerable.

This state of mind at length could not longer be borne, and, going down to Lawford House, one afternoon, he determined that *that* night should not pass without his obtaining some determinate satisfaction.

The time seemed favourable in several respects, and Mr. Bannatyne hoped that the careless eccentricity of the old gentleman would, at some part of the evening, afford him the wished-for opportunity of saying a few impassioned words in private to Rebecca. As he sat with them both in the evening, conversing as usual, he even thought that Rebecca seemed

in a mood more than commonly favourable to his purpose, while the uncle was, this night, peculiarly taciturn and abstracted. Thus, the two young persons being left very much to the obligation of direct conversation, the clergyman's delight was evident in his countenance, even in the midst of his fever of watchful anxiety.

Mr. Prior had a way of rising from his seat and walking about, during familiar conversation, talking as he walked; and it was not uncommon for him to open the door during a pause in their discourse, and to go out and down stairs; when, having taken a short turn in the open air, he would quietly come back, and, taking no notice of what might have been done or said in his absence, would proceed with the conversation or discussion, resuming it precisely from the point at which he had left it.

This night he was, as I said, more than ordinarily absent and taciturn, until, the conversation between Mr. Bannatyne and his niece turning accidentally upon the subject of the remarkable facts furnished by the infinite di-

versity in human character, he seemed suddenly roused into eager attention. Lewis Bannatyne, observing this, pursued the subject warmly and eloquently, maintaining his favourite doctrine, that, viewing them philosophically, mankind were not so bad and wicked as they were often called, either by querulous misanthropists who did not sufficiently consider the position in which the poor race of Adam were generally placed, or by gloomy expounders of divine revelation who refused to open their eyes to the whole of the subject.

"There is truth in what you say," said Mr. Prior: "man is not, after all, a very bad sort of being; he is merely contemptible—contemptible even in his virtues, for they are either hardly worthy the name, or are overstretched until they become the plague and the bane of virtue itself;—contemptible also in his vices, which, while they also often scarcely deserve the name, are yet the bane of his happiness, and the world's constant curse. And yet," he continued, "I have known some, and the world has preserved the history of many,

who were as thoroughly and purely wicked as even fiction has pictured, or as hell itself could furnish."

"And I have met with several," said the clergyman, looking across to Rebecca, "who, as far as I can judge, are as purely virtuous, gentle, and good, as ever poet painted as belonging to humanity; and on whom Heaven itself can only confer greater purity, or higher elevation of spirit, by divesting them of the clay that as yet ties them down to mortality!"

"I even agree with you also in that," said the uncle, getting animated, "and I admire the man who can see this much in mankind, and who rejoices, as you seem to do, in the pleasing truth. But did you ever observe, Mr. Bannatyne, how much mankind seem to run, as to disposition and character, in distinct races, possessing and maintaining a specific series of family characteristics? This is the fact, not only with isolated tribes, as among Indian nations, but even in our artificial and refined state of society; for single families have often, for ages and generations, evinced a spe-

cific and characteristic individuality. I need not now refer you to the history of some of the chief families who figure in the annals of our country, for the distinct characteristics by which they were known in their own times, or are known to us who live after them, as far as we can trace some degree of purity in the lineage, nor need I instance to you the Stuart family, which has passed away; nor most of the other prominent families which now fill the different thrones of Europe. A slight attention to their several histories will prove the truth of what I contend for, which is, perhaps, of more importance than is generally thought."

"The subject is somewhat curious, sir," said the minister, thoughtfully, "and no doubt important, as a general enquiry."

"It is important also as a *particular* enquiry, Mr. Bannatyne," said the other, with peculiar meaning.

"Perhaps it may, sir, but I have not as yet thought of turning my attention to it."

"It is the duty of every one to know character, that he may not blindly contribute to

swell the black current of evil which deluges the world. It is the process of nature, that man forms connections in life, and thereby some particular race is continued. But what race would a wise man choose to continue? Shall we be, in this particular, less wise than the beasts that perish? Does not the gentlest dove mate with the most gentle of her kind? Does the blood courser unite his fiery nature with the sluggish breed of the Pays Bas? Are there not, among men, whole families which, like the birds of the boughs, belong to what may be called a good or an evil nest? and shall the reason of men be less useful for their own happiness than the common instinct of the beasts of the field?"

"What mean you, sir?"

"It is of the last importance, my dear sir," said Mr. Prior, emphatically, "for those who wish to form connections in life, to know those with whom they unite, both with reference to their own after-happiness, and that of the posterity that may be the result. And, if you wish to know me, or any man or woman, in a deeper

sense than can be obtained through the conventional mockeries of social intercourse, enquire the history of the family from which I have sprung; ascertain the peculiarities of the nest to which the bird may belong with which you would offer to mate for life. Trust me, the qualities of the heart, the peculiarities of the blood, and the great considerations of the disposition and bias, are with much certainty transmitted through families, and are matter of inheritance from the male or female branches of a house."

Having risen and continued walking while he said this, the old gentleman, almost before Mr. Bannatyne was aware, had left the room; and the minister had become so absorbed in the sudden reflections caused by this conversation, that he did not notice Mr. Prior's absence, until he heard the echo of his footsteps as he passed through the hall below.

The moment was now come for which Lewis had so long watched: Rebecca and himself were left quite alone, and seated opposite to each other. She smiled faintly, and seemed

about to continue the conversation; but, as she looked across to him, her tongue was arrested by observing the expression of anxiety depicted in his countenance. For a few moments he also attempted, in vain, to utter a word, while the silence seemed so intense and so painful, that the lovers thought they heard the beating of each other's hearts.

At length Lewis was able to get out the single word "Rebecca."

She started at the word; but, instantly recovering her breath, as if relieved by the sound of his voice, she smiled sadly, as usual, while he proceeded.

"Rebecca," he said, "I see you perceive my anxiety to say a few words to you. Do not, I pray you, think of moving, but hear me. I have long waited for such an opportunity as this. Nay, listen to me, Rebecca; for the state of my mind is now such, that ——"

"Some other time, Mr. Bannatyne; do not speak now!" she exclaimed, interrupting him. "Do not, my esteemed friend!—I know what

you would say—I have dreaded this. Do not say any thing to me, but what may be spoken in my uncle's presence—and, hark! there he is returning again."

"No, Rebecca," he answered, after listening a moment, "it is only your fancy that thus alarms you: but now, for the sake of Heaven," he added, solemnly, "grant me an interview for five minutes only, at some time and place where I may speak to you without witness or interruption; for I have that to say to you which is of the last importance to me, both as it regards my peace of mind, and even my future usefulness as a minister. Rebecca, what alarms you thus?"

"Oh, Mr. Bannatyne, do not—do not speak of such a thing!"

"What on earth can you mean, Rebecca?"
"I cannot tell you, Lewis—I cannot; why should you ask my meaning of me? I conjure you, as my friend—as my minister, whom I wish to hear weekly in public without distraction—whom I wish ever to honour and rever-

ence ! not to seek from me any further explanation regarding my family, or my own unhappy state ; and, above all, that you will not offer to speak to me differently from what you have till now done."

"Rebecca!" he exclaimed, "I cannot bear this. This strange mystery, where my happiness is so deeply involved, will drive me distracted. I must be suffered to express what my own breast can no longer contain. I must be satisfied from your own lips, or ——"

"Or we must never meet more," she said, calmly : "that, Lewis, is the only alternative. I have foreseen all this for some time ; but my own weakness, and the pleasure I have enjoyed in your society, as well as love for my uncle, who, I saw, was also refreshed by your conversation, has made me put off the evil day : but it has come at length, and too soon. Lewis, it will be better for us both that, from this day forward, we meet no more."

"And not one word of explanation of this mystery, Rebecca ? "

"There is no mystery, Lewis, — none what-

ever; it is merely duty that compels me. Oh! do not look so. I cannot bear it!"

"And will you not meet me, to hear what is bursting in my bosom? Will you not speak to me one word for the satisfaction of my feelings?"

"Do not ask me, Lewis. I entreat of you do not ask me,—for I cannot." And, so saying, she hurried out of the apartment.

He threw himself back into his chair, in a state of stupefaction, from what had just passed. In a few minutes afterwards, however, he was aroused from his stupor, by the soft tread of footsteps, and, looking up, perceived the slender figure of Rebecca glide softly into the room; and, coming forward, she again placed herself in the chair she had formerly occupied, quite near to him.

"Forgive me, Mr. Bannatyne," she said, after a moment, and breaking the painful silence. "I ask your forgiveness; for I already repent me of the determination which I have just expressed; and, though I know not well

what further I shall have strength to say to you, yet I am aware there is something more than I have yet been able to speak due to your feelings. I have resolved, therefore,—resolved, in spite of the painful delicacy of a subject which is bitter to my thoughts, and in spite of all a maiden's pride, to give you, out of my own mouth, a most sad explanation. It is no romantic fancy that has caused this reluctance to meet you on a seeming mystery; but there are reasons for all this, which you will understand when you come to hear them. In one word, I will meet you this night, even before you sleep, in the little conservatory at the east angle of the mansion. Wait for me there, after you have parted from my uncle. And do not, Lewis, put any unkind interpretations on my conduct, either now, or hitherto. I will meet you alone, as I would my brother," she added, passionately, clasping her hands together; "I will speak to you as my minister; I will unlock the secret of my sorrow to you, as my adviser, as my friend, perhaps for the last

time we may ever dare to talk in private. But, hark ! here comes my uncle."

It was a weary half hour that Lewis spent after this, when, at length, taking leave of Mr. Prior for the night, he sprang forth to the park without, to wait, at the angle of the mansion, for his interview with Rebecca.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT a large portion of our time in this life is wasted in mere *waiting!*" exclaimed the minister to himself, as he paced anxiously up and down, within view of the place appointed; ten, fifteen, twenty minutes having already elapsed, and still the conservatory was dark and dull. "Waiting," he went on, "for *something* that seems necessary for our happiness, and the want of which prevents us from enjoying the present hour,—the hour that for the time we think so long, and which afterwards appears so short, and so barren of every thing but the torture of impatience—but there! at last I see a light."

As he hastened towards the conservatory, he saw, through the glass, the figure of Rebecca moving inside, and looking anxiously around her. Presently he was at the small door which opened into it, under a porch of creeping plants, which she unlocked, and he stood before her.

She seemed to hesitate a moment as he gazed in her face, while she stood partly shaded by the plants of the conservatory, the habitual melancholy of her countenance amounting at this moment to an expression that was almost tragic ; and yet, as her dark eye beamed on him, he thought he had never seen her appear so charming.

“ I am most grateful for this condescension, Rebecca,” he said, “ more grateful than I can express.”

“ Alas ! Lewis,” she answered, mournfully, “ you will not say so before we part. This stolen meeting between you and me looks romantic, but, assuredly, it will end in being only common-place, barren, and sad. I would not affect to be blind to the sentiment that burns in your eye, my friend, nor is this meeting, I confess, without feeling on the part of one even in my hopeless predicament. But we meet not, Lewis, on this painful occasion, as those meet who have words to say, that must never pass my lips, and emotions to indulge in, that I must never feel ; or that I must smother

within the struggling bosom where they rise. But do not reply here; it is fit that our communication should take place in that part of this ancient mansion where the very walls around us may tend to the illustration of what I have to say. Come, I will be your guide: follow me."

They trod lightly along several passages with which Lewis was quite unacquainted; then, mounting by a back stair until they came to the upper part of the building, she opened a door; and they entered with some hesitation a square lofty room with a carved and painted ceiling, like an old saloon, and the walls hung round with old family portraits.

"I do not bring you here, sir," she said, as she observed him fix his eyes upon the heavy carved ornaments of the chimney-piece; and seeming to feel almost uncomfortable, while he glanced around at the range of painted faces which appeared to gaze on him from within their frames,—"I do not bring you into this unfrequented apartment from the impulse of any romantic fancy, or that I myself have

any pleasure in entering a place which can impress me with nothing but associations deeply humbling to my spirit; but simply from the reason I have already given, and that here, at least, we have little chance of being interrupted or overheard."

They seated themselves on two old carved chairs, covered with rich but faded damask; and she gazed for some moments, in melancholy silence, upon the row of portraits on the walls, until painful emotions seemed to be struggling in her bosom.

"Rebecca, you seem strangely moved," he said at length: "speak, I beseech you! what mystery is this that you still delay to disclose?"

"There is no mystery, Lewis; I tell you again there is nothing remarkable in what I have to speak of, although every one feels his own sorrows most deeply. Nay, do not look upon me thus, Lewis. It is no sin of mine or my father's that I have need to be ashamed of. It is simply that there is a judgment of Heaven upon our house. But doubtless it is better to

fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men: and I submit. Alas ! do not look so piteously upon me."

" Rebecca, I am distracted for you ! and you will not put even sympathy towards you in my power, by at once disclosing what you have to tell me. And yet you have undertaken to—"

" Well, Sir, I know I have promised. Alas ! that this horrible statement should come from my own lips. Observe you these portraits around you, Mr. Bannatyne: some of these are grim and stern, like the men of their time ; others, as you see, are mild and melancholy of look, particularly those of latter generations. But, to begin with my father,—my poor, sad, interesting father; that is he with the black robe and the pale countenance, so like my uncle whom you have just parted from. I wonder how I can bear to enter this room after what I know. It was here he chiefly lived of latter years; and see you that small door in the recess, under the large picture?"

" Yes, I see it: but what then ?"

“ That door opens into the small closet in which he died ; and for two years before his death he never left that room, although generally in good health. Heard you never his history ?”

“ No, Rebecca, no : but why go into this unnecessary train of allusion to the history of your ancestors ? Nothing that you can say shall prevent me declaring that I love—tenderly, passionately, love ! Nay, it is to speak this one word that I have anxiously sought to meet you in private ; and nothing that may have impressed your pure and delicate mind shall prevent me from suing for that hand, for that heart, without which I feel that I shall never know happiness. Why do you thus shrink from me, and look so fearfully. What can this mean ?”

“ Oh, Lewis, your passionate words distract me ! why will you not listen to the tale that I am about to tell you ?”

“ I see what it all tends to, Rebecca : some of these grim carles have, in the person of your father, engaged you under some impious, some

rash, some unnatural vow, which you ought not to keep. Every feeling of the heart, every consideration of life, love, hope, Heaven itself, seem to conjure you to break it, and to preserve the peace and happiness of your ancient house. Will you do so, Rebecca, for my sake — for your own, will you break this accursed vow?"

"Your impatience misleads you, Lewis," she answered calmly: "there is no vow, no engagement; and why will you still speak to me of love? I must not answer your impassioned language. On that subject, as I told you at first, my lips must be sealed for ever, even to you."

"Then you are betrothed to another — I must not speak to you of the sentiment that absorbs my heart — that heart that I ought to devote to the service of the sanctuary, but which irresistible passion has made to swerve in favour of one who is icy cold, and cruel as cold, or you could not tantalise me thus."

"Oh! not cold, Lewis — not cruel; you wrong me sadly when you say so!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, while her

voice quivered with rising emotion. “What would you have me to say? would you have me to speak as it becomes not a maiden to speak, to him whom she would love, does love, but dares not! Oh, Lewis, pity me! I am a wretched doomed girl. The hand of Heaven is upon me. The joys of a wife, the tenderness of a mother, I must never know: I must wear out my life in maiden seclusion, and go down to the grave, the last and saddest of my race, without a relative to weep over me when I am gone. Ah! Lewis, it is you that have made me feel my weakness”—and a burst of tears stopped her utterance.

“What can be the meaning of this dreadful distress!” he said, as he watched her while she sobbed beside him: “I will not again open my lips until you disclose to me the mystery, or whatever it is, that places you in this unhappy situation, and causes you this grief. Rebecca, have pity on me, and tell me in two words the cause of all this.”

“I will, I will, when I am a little composed. Heaven will give me strength to speak of the

sad misfortune of my family, even to you. But can you not save my feelings, by surmising what I mean? Have you never learned any thing remarkable about my ancestors? Have you never, Lewis,"—and she fixed her large eloquent eyes on him as she spoke,—“observed any thing peculiar about my uncle or me?”

“ No, Rebecca; I have heard nothing; I have observed nothing.”

“ Alas! that I should have to undergo this additional trial,” she added, mournfully: “then know, Lewis, that — bring your ear to my lips, while I speak the dreadful words — there is *madness* in my family!”

“ Yes, now you must hear all! I am doomed by the blood that runs in my veins to be yet a raving maniac! — nay, start not, for it has been the fate of almost all those, my ancestors, whose pale faces now look sadly upon us by the dim light of this single taper, and several of whom passed years in that state, the most humbling that Heaven permits to afflict poor humanity, in that very closet within the recess, where also

my poor father died in the melancholy insensibility of total derangement ! Now, Lewis," she added, standing up, and looking down upon him with despairing energy, " what do you think of your poor Rebecca now ? If ever, then, or whenever that heavy hour arrives, surely you will come and try to soothe me in my sorrow, without despising me ; but yours I can never be in this world. Now, farewell ! the bitter words are spoken, and I am relieved."

For a few moments, the minister sat and gazed upon her, unable to speak.

" This is a sad tale, Rebecca," he at length said ; " but yet you may in some degree be deceiving yourself. No, it cannot be ! your sensibility perverts your reason. Believe me," he said, starting up, " this is nothing but delusion, and you are yet to be mine."

" Lewis !" she exclaimed, " do not terrify me, by the mention of a supposition, the fulfilment of which might entail upon me and yourself incurable sorrow and guilt. Listen ! remember you the dreadful penalty of the Roman law for such an impious act as you now

dare to hint at? ¹ Ah! well may you start at the thought. And, how could you bear to think of my doing as my grandmother did, many years ago? Observe! see you this portrait of that dark-eyed lady? how pale she looks, and yet how benign! What a sheeted effect that plain white drapery has, in contrast with these black glossy curls that wave over it! Alas! how can I look at her — my unfortunate ancestress! You are still incredulous. Come hither, and I will convince you," she added, opening the shutters of a long Gothic window which overlooked the woody height at the rear of the mansion: "see you that," she went on, pointing to a small sheet of water, spread out on the height, upon the bosom of which the moonbeams now shone brightly, and from the further end of which fell into a chasm below, the cascade that formed the source of Lawford streamlet."

" Is it not a beautiful spot, quiet and lovely? and yet it is never visited nor mentioned by any of us, from the sad associations connected

¹ See Note A. at the end of this Story.

with it; it is only seen well from this room and the closet within, and has always been called the Lady's Linn, from the time that that unfortunate lady threw herself into it one day, when the evil spirit of our house was upon her, and parted with her suffering maniac existence at the cold bottom of that ominous lake."

" You shudder with horror, Lewis," she went on, after a pause, " and well you may, though far less than I ought, at past misfortune and future doom. But this is not all, and you do not believe still, although I have my own father to instance. Ah ! my poor, sad, unhappy father — I think I see him this moment, as he placed his cold hand on my head, in that very closet beyond the little door, and said that I was fated to be yet — hark ! did you not hear some one within. Heavens ! who is this coming upon us here ? Look, Lewis, the door opens ! Can this be my dear father again !" and she fell on her knees before the figure which now entered from the closet, wrapped in night clothes, bearing a light, and looking

angrily upon them both, as they stood in astonished confusion.

“ What means this ? ” said the intruder. “ How are you in this room, Rebecca ? and what do you here again, sir ? ” he added, addressing Mr. Bannatyne : while both, having recovered their momentary terror, now recognised the voice of Mr. Prior, who, having heard a noise, had followed it to this deserted apartment.

“ It was from *my* earnest entreaty, sir,” said the minister, stepping forward, “ that Miss Prior consented to this meeting.”

“ And in this room, Rebecca ? was there no place but this for your midnight assignation ? ”

“ Mine is the fault only, sir ; and be *mine* the punishment, if there is to be any,” said Bannatyne, warmly.

“ Do you interrupt me, sir ? ” said the aroused gentleman, with a very unusual expression. “ Ha ! I see how it is. It will be necessary for you, young man, to discontinue your visits at this house.”

“ That may be, sir,” said Mr. Bannatyne,

with dignity ; “ I must request, however, that you draw no unfavourable conclusion respecting your niece, at least, from what you now witness. Only be considerate towards *her*, sir, and I obey you from this moment ; ” and he ended by taking two or three strides across the apartment.

A change now came suddenly over the face of the old man, as he stood looking at both of the young persons, — the countenance of Rebecca wearing an expression of inward agony ; and, stepping forward hastily, he caught the clergyman by the arm.

“ Nay, Mr. Bannatyne,” he said, much moved, “ you will not go from my house in anger, if you are here for the last time. The wrath of Heaven, that has pursued my family until the tenth generation, is enough for me and my poor solitary niece to bear. Forgive me, my friend. I might have known that it would have come to this, and am myself to blame ; but if we must lose even *your* society for ever, take a kind farewell of my poor Rebecca. There is *my* hand, too ! We have spent many

happy evenings together ; but I see no happiness remains for our doomed house, on this side of our final resting-place. Heaven bless you, sir, and preserve to you the happiness that must never be ours ! ” and, laying his hand on the arm of Lewis, and looking sadly in his face as he pronounced this benediction, he then lifted up his taper, and turned to leave the room.

“ Sir, this is evident delusion ! ” said Lewis, detaining the uncle in his turn, “ a mutual, a fatal, deception of yourselves. It is but the melancholy fantasy of voluntary misery that is destroying the happiness of this worthy family, and is now tearing asunder warm hearts, that are already knit indissolubly. It is parting for ever this dear lady and me, not as even the grave parts friends and lovers, but making a separation which must be a living death. You shake your head at what I say — you still look round at these solemn faces on the canvass, and forth from the window on that cold moonlit lake. Great Heaven above ! ”

keep us all from the frightful delusions of insanity ! ”

Clasping their hands, as their young friend spoke these words, the old man and Rebecca threw a look upwards, as if they would have penetrated to Heaven, and the ardent *Amen!* that rose from the bottom of their hearts, seemed to be echoed back like the whisper of the dead, from the pale figures that looked down from the walls around them. The old gentleman, now catching hold of the minister’s hand, wrung it with a meaning look in solemn silence, then turning away, departed slowly through the small door of the adjoining closet.

We may not dwell upon the ultimate parting of Lewis and Rebecca—reason is great against the weakness of passion, and the virtuous heart suffereth many trials.

CHAPTER V.

IT is not every day that one meets with any thing that interests them: for the world is a dull world, and the heart a barren thing; and it is seldom that even the pains of life are of sufficient dignity to excite a moral reflection.

But *I* was excited, and my heart was interested about the singular situation of the Priors and their visiter; for one pang or throb of deep-seated feeling — one genuine manifestation of the noble self-denials of resolute virtue, does more to reconcile us to our “low-thoughted” species, than the thousand varieties of selfishness and stupidity.

And so I kept the matter of these young persons much in my mind, and thought over all that they might have thought, and fancied in my sympathy what they might have felt; and, as soon as the summer came round again, I determined to wander towards their part of the country.

Away then I set in the early part of the year, and I thought to get to Hillington by the end of the week ; for, although I am no great saint (as the world had better know), I hate your Sunday stragglers and busy idlers, who cannot enjoy the solace of religion and of rest. But the week's journey was long, and the weather was blasty ; and, being unusually fatigued on the road, by the time Saturday night came, I was fain to take up my quarters at a very indifferent inn, with a great flashy sign, about four miles from Hillington.

Having rested my weary limbs there for the night, I rose, refreshed in body and pious in spirit, on the dull Sunday morning, proposing to walk forward, and be into Hillington in time for the kirk service : but, whether it was carnal laziness, which is apt to come over me on that particular time of uprising, or whether it was the solacing sweetness of the road that made me muse and dawdle on the way, I know not ; but it was long after the congregation had collected in the old building, and somewhat towards the latter end of the ser-

vice, that I found myself within the precincts of the town, and pondering my way through the sweet and solemn old churchyard.

This morning was exceedingly different from the pleasant evening when I had first entered the town. It was drizzling rain, and heavily dull. The sun waded sullenly through the thick vapours; dark clouds of streaming mist lingered in the valleys as I came along; and by the time I got into the churchyard of Hillington, feeling ashamed of entering the kirk at this late hour, I sat down on a tombstone, languid and sad. The people within were singing a psalm; and the old melody, which came over my ear in the distance, was so quaintly plaintive, and was drawn out, as I thought, with such melting simplicity, that it seemed to me like a requiem for the obscure dead who lay in the graveyard around me, so that, in my present mood, it almost melted me into tears.

I rose, however, and entered the kirk, in order still to catch a remnant of the pious inspiration of the morning worship, and haply

to make such observations as, from the long interval which had elapsed since my former visit, should now occur to me. After I had slipped myself stealthily into a back pew, as became a late interloper upon the sanctity of the service, the very first look I got of the face of the young minister showed me that something was wrong with him, and had taken effect upon his mind,— that something had happened, in my absence, to damp the glow of his natural enthusiasm, and to cloud his spirit with serious melancholy. I was still more convinced of this, from the strain of the prayer which he was now offering up to Him “who seeth not as man seeth, and who trieth the hearts and the reins of the children of men.” It was not yet two years since I had been at his placing,— and yet a change had evidently come over his character: for the very tones of his voice were quite altered. Even his congregation, as was natural from the affection they bore him, had been infected by his spirit, and, musing upon the deep reasonings and sad inferences which the state of his mind led him

to draw from what he observed in the world, his people went and came, every seventh day, to their solemn old church, with a pervading and inexplicable gloom.

After some time, I had a glance also at the face of Miss Prior, to whom my attention had from the first been directed; but the look I obtained of her was with some difficulty; for, though there she sat, beside her grave and reflective uncle, in the family pew, under the moth-eaten scutcheon, as on my first seeing her; she did not now, as before, look once with admiration in the minister's face, but sat during the whole time in one position; her face shaded with her hand, and her large dark eyes, when I could get a sight of them, preserving the same striking expression which they had ever done, but contrasting strongly with the paleness of her face, as if profoundly steeped in melancholy.

When the service was over, I was obliged to go home with the laird of Glauderston, who had noticed me in the church, considerably against my own inclination; for I would much

rather have taken up my quarters with the blithe landlady of the inn, where I should undoubtedly have learned something regarding those whose history now interested me. Being at this time ignorant of what had taken place to Mr. Bannatyne, I tried to get something out of the laird and his family; but I might as well have consulted the clumsy posts which, under the name of pillars, upheld the dignity of the front entrance to his house: for the laird was one of the worthy people, of which three fourths of the world are composed, who can tell you readily where the most advantageous things are to be got to eat and to wear, and how this man made money, and the other man lost it, but never take the least notice of any thing of higher import, or which might be of interest to a wandering observer like myself. All I could learn from him was, that the new minister had considerably disappointed many good men in the parish; that he had not used him or his daughter altogether well, but had gone about a strange reserved family, who lived at a place called Lawford, until there

had been some falling-out among them; for that now he seldom was seen to go there, and yet was still unmarried, and was, in short, a man that few could understand.

Next day, when about to walk down into the village, I learned, by mere accident, that the good and sensible senior pastor of the parish, Mr. Kinloch, was now confined to bed, and had for some time been thought to be dying. This news was impressive to me, from the opinion I had formed of his judgment and information, on my first meeting him in this very house; and, in short, I was greatly minded to step over to the manse, and see the old man; both from the respect I felt for him, and because I had a curiosity to know what he would say regarding the present state of mind and character of Mr. Bannatyne, his successor. The thought was no sooner a matter of musing in my mind, than the knock of a stranger was heard at the laird's door.

This circumstance giving me an excuse for leaving Glauderston House, I immediately

departed, to visit, by his couch, the dying old minister. I mounted the creaking stairs to the chamber of the sick, and sat myself down by his bedside. "How sad a thing is death!" I thought; "how pathetic to look upon and talk to a living being, who is so soon to be 'for ever hid from our eyes!'"

"Your visit, my friend," said he, "is a refreshment to me. Sit down by me, and let us commune together. If I am not mistaken, you witnessed the placing of Mr. Bannatyne, my successor."

"I did," said I; "and great is my concern respecting him. To say the truth, many a weary foot I have travelled, and many a hill I have climbed, in this upland neighbourhood, until I was breathless, for little other earthly end but to hear, from time to time, how he lived, and what was his history, and that of the strange family of Lawford, in the hollow."

"I wish I could see him now," said the dying man, solemnly: "I feel that my time is not to be long; and I have much to say to him

before I depart. I fear me that his mind is unsettled. Oh, that I could see him while I have strength!"

The old man had not the words well out of his mouth, when the servant announced that Mr. Bannatyne wished to be admitted.

I thought that this was a providential opportunity for me, and waited anxiously to hear and see what might pass on so serious an occasion. In another minute Mr. Bannatyne was bending over the bed of the dying man.

I was affected upon observing the evident change in his appearance. The thoughtfulness of five and forty was already on his brow, though twenty years had yet to run their course before he should have arrived at that age. I saw that a death-bed advice was going to be delivered to him; and my ears were open to its solemn import. After a few preliminary sentences, the dying man, settling himself up in bed, thus spoke: —

"It has been matter of satisfaction and thankfulness to me, Mr. Bannatyne," he said, "that Providence has been pleased to ap-

point over my beloved people of this parish, to succeed me as their pastor, one possessing the mental qualities and endowments of which you are well entitled to boast. I confess it would have caused serious reflections at such a time as this, and might have deeply embittered my dying day, had I had to leave my simple yet intelligent people in the charge of many of those raw youths, who, springing up from among the lower orders, are yearly issuing from our cheap universities, and who, placed in the important position of religious and moral instructors, by the simple forms of our Genevan church,—under circumstances very frequently when they are below the level of the generality of the people, in all that constitutes valuable applicable acquirement,—serve so effectually to perpetuate prejudices, of which the age is justly ashamed, and cruelly to hinder the natural struggles towards improvement of a great portion of our intellectual countrymen.

“ It is not for me, however, at a time of this kind, to expatiate upon so well known a disadvantage which attaches to our popular pres-

byterian ecclesia, and our pious nation ; further than as a ground for congratulation to myself and my people, that I am leaving over them (you cannot suspect me of flattery at this hour) a man of capacity, who, with the education suitable for his office, is possessed of the general knowledge and intellectual advancement which form the characteristics of a gentleman ; and who, while he builds up his people in their holy faith, will deal out to them, from time to time, rational principles to provoke and to assist their own thinking, upon subjects suitable for them ; and who knows how, by making them wiser, to make them better, men.

“ Yet a few things I would take leave to say to you, Mr. Bannatyne, as I am about to be taken from you, which, whether, with your good sense, you may need them, or not, may not be thought impertinent from me, as the result of some experience, both as a minister of religion, and an observer of the world. Some of these things you may think somewhat common-place ; in truth, I think them so myself : yet the daily disregard of them shows that they

are either less understood than you and I would suppose, or that their importance is not admitted until after the usual disappointments of experience, and the incurring, and propagation, perhaps, of much real evil.

“ The most common error of young men of some natural assurance and readiness of speech, and whose necessary isolation from the world, and *set-up* position, as religious teachers, is so apt to give them a false opinion of themselves, is the vulgar ambition to become *popular* preachers, and so to get the empty portion of the world, for a brief period, to run after and admire them. I need scarcely tell you that the low artifices and feverish strivings of this sort of ambition are far beneath a man of real talent or true worth; and that it holds with preachers of the Gospel, as with other men who address the public, that the quiet approbation and hearty respect, as well as steady friendship, of *one man* of sound intelligence and worth, is to be prized above all the unstable shoutings of the giddy multitude. Besides, no man will ever gain extensive popularity, at least he will

never retain it, upon so debateable a subject as religion, by sincerely speaking the truth. He must study the character and flatter the prejudices of the itching-eared portion of his people, exaggerate what they delight to hear exaggerated, cloak or suppress what is likely to offend, and, in short, become a pander to the eternal errors and hypocrisies of the vulgar.

“ What is the usual end of all this? That, after the feverish excitements and ungodly triumphs of his brief day shall have passed away, and the inflated fool has scared away from his acquaintance every wise man and estimable friend, he dwindles down and sinks into unwelcome isolation, harassed with vain endeavours to please the low-minded and the vacillating, whom he first condescended to flatter, but who now, tired of his bombast, begin to suspect his motives, and traduce his name; and it will be well if the whole does not terminate in the bitter inveighings of disappointed vanity, and the impotent complainings of merited neglect.

“ With respect to the character of your instruction to a mixed people, I cannot suppose that any aberration into a weak enthusiasm for particular theological views, which are ever varying with the fashion of the age, or the narrow conceit of individuals; or any mistaken attempt to propitiate a clamorous party, will ever lead you into the common error of the more ignorant of our cloth, of worrying your people constantly with puzzling reasonings upon mere *doctrine*, and ringing constant changes upon such words as ‘faith’ and ‘grace,’ or at least upon what may be contained in one or two simple propositions. This wretched system, which frightens from our churches so many of the best informed and most valuable men in society, and which makes religion itself so often treated with sneering and contempt, is in general resorted to from mere paucity of intellect and information, by those who find it much easier to fill up their tasked hour with the unintelligible rubbish of cant and quotation, than with those applicable views of human life, Scripture, and duty, which require in the preacher some

thinking and observation, and his failure in which show too glaringly his real ignorance and incapacity.

“ Believe me, sir, this is a most serious evil, both as respects religion and morality, and has the most extensive effects even upon our national character. Do you not observe, by comparing one place with another, and our own nation with others under a different system, that it is this priestcraft-jangling of words and names, this early and incessant harassment of the intellect, with doctrinal mystification, while the practical self-denials of a truly religious spirit, the great subjects of justice and mercy, honour and honesty, between man and man, under the names of virtue and morality, are neglected, or even sneered at, as ethical and heathenish ; and thus, by the habitual setting up of doctrine and dogma, above, or even in opposition to, what is tangible and practical in conduct, systematically forms the character of our charged national hypocrisy ?

“ I need not further show you that all this arises from the great preponderance, in Scot-

land, of the lower order of mind, in that important matter, public instruction ; for the very literature in our book-shops, and which is devoured in such quantity by the class that have public influence, would alone prove it. I sincerely rejoice, however, that you will be one among the few loftier intellects, who will fairly devote yourself to the noble task of restoring the natural union between a modest piety and that enlightened sense of obedience and of duty, that is at all times more apt to do, than to teach — to make men less ready to babble and to argue, than to show their faith by *their works*. Thus religion, instead of being an uneasiness and almost a horror, as it is frequently taught ; you, by interweaving it with those practical views of social life, feeling, and experience, which its genuine operation makes so truly interesting, will show it as designed to be, not only the corrector of the vices and waywardness of the human heart, but the consolation and the staff demanded by the weakness of humanity. Consider, sir, in this respect, the deep importance of your office, and how much good you may do among your people, by giving them a

key to the understanding of their own characters, by detecting and exposing to them the intricacies of unchristian selfishness, as well as the delusions of blinded self-love; so that, teaching them habitually to attend to their own motives, in connection with duty, some rational foundation may be laid for true Christian benevolence.

" In connection with what I have said regarding doctrine, however, I would not advise you to abstain entirely from abstract reasonings, if your subjects are chosen not for the purpose of showing yourself off, which I know you to be above, but for the communicating of applicable *practical* instruction. Indeed, a certain quantity of what is called pulpit logic upon debateable subjects is perhaps indispensable, in accommodation to the taste of the common people; for our national character is somewhat metaphysical, and it being a characteristic of those who have little knowledge, to delight in subtlety and ratiocination, it is to his preacher that the poor man naturally looks for the chief part of his necessary mental entertainment. Beware,

however, of leading your people too far for their previous knowledge, and be careful not to say much upon subjects which are purely theological. If you, by an injudicious use of controverted subjects, teach your people to argue, instead of to act; if you once make them conceited and puffed up with their fancied knowledge, you will raise up to yourself a hundred enemies, you will thin your congregation, and divide your parish into endless sects of squabbling disputants; and you will ultimately find, that, instead of being the minister of peace, you have been the minister of confusion.

“ One word more, I must say, with more particular reference to yourself. I learn, with regret, that your sermons have of late assumed more of a tone of melancholy than is strictly consistent either with your known good sense or your time of life. This I sincerely regret, because to me it is an evidence of some internal suffering on your part, with the cause of which it does not become me to intermeddle. But, permit me to say, that, although it is very natural for any public instructor to mix his own present feelings with what he delivers to others,

any peculiarly gloomy view of human life is unphilosophical and injurious. It is unphilosophical, because, whatever may be the present sorrows of individuals, such a view of things does not agree with common opinion and experience; for I need not remind you that human life is neither a state of entire happiness, nor the contrary, but is as the mind happens to view it; and the views of the mind on this subject are with many in a state of much oscillation, although generally on the side of cheerfulness and comfort. What I allude to is often exceedingly injurious, especially in this end of the island,—for the Scots are a people predisposed to gloom; and the cruel and vulgar system of exaggerating the terrors of death and judgment, and even drawing terrifying pictures of future horrors, is never practised by men of sense, but by popularity-hunting fools, to catch the applause of the vulgar.

“ Mr. Bannatyne,” added the old minister, seriously, after a long breath, “ I must say, further, that I could wish much to live still to see you married. A minister of the Gospel should not be long without a companion in his home,

that he may not be subject to the distractions of passion, or those wanderings of the heart, that belong to the solitude of the virtuous bachelor. But forgive my freedom; it is dictated only by anxiety for your usefulness and happiness.

“ Finally, my friend,” he continued, after another pause, “ never let your aims, in any respect, *descend*, tempted either by the clamorous applause of the base, or scared by the vituperation of the ignorant, which few of the wise can at all times escape. Seek constantly the approbation of the highest and the best, along with the approval of your own mind, and a sense of Divine favour.

“ Forgive, and yet think of, this long advice. I feel myself growing weak, and see, in the filmy dimness of earthly organs, that death is drawing fast near. Give me your hands, my friends; — nay, look not so sad, for my hope is good, and I am well content.

“ Heaven bless you! Heaven make you happy!”

Why should I dwell upon the death of the righteous? I saw and was conscious that the living had laid it to heart!

CHAPTER VI.

IT was some time after this my second arrival in Hillington, and even after the Rev. Mr. Kinloch was laid in the grave, ere I was able to come at such authentic particulars regarding the young minister, and the much talked of Rebecca Prior, as satisfied the craving curiosity which had been raised in me concerning them.

I found that after the shock had somewhat passed off, which Mr. Bannatyne's mind had received by the disclosures at that painful scene, sketched two chapters back; and he was able to think calmly, and to endeavour at some degree of resignation, that he had again ventured down towards Lawford House; and though his announcement had a startling and almost terrifying effect upon the solitary Rebecca, both herself and her uncle felt a relief from his visit.

"I am come yet again to see you, sir," said Lewis, as the old gentleman kindly offered him

his hand, “ if you will receive me, at least once more, as a well-wishing friend and your minister ; for, to say truth, I feel that I cannot all at once wean myself from society in which I have enjoyed so many happy hours.”

“ Mr. Bannatyne, you are welcome !” was all that Mr. Prior said ; and he spoke the words emphatically, and with some emotion, as he shook the young clergyman by the hand. He then stood still, and gazed involuntarily as the latter turned to address Rebecca, as one does upon an experiment, of the result of which he is anxiously uncertain.

That meeting between the two was certainly sad and embarrassing ; for, in spite of the trembling pleasure that was after all experienced by both, on finding themselves again in presence of each other, the sense of humiliation, and something like dread, on the part of Rebecca, was so acute during the whole time they were together ; and stifled feelings so mingled with compassion in the breast of the minister, that a few guarded sentences was all that either would venture to utter. This pro-

ceeding had, however, by no means a deceiving effect; it was but like the rainy haze, that, excluding from view the April sun, serves, instead of concealing, to add the charms of awakened fancy to the pure brightness and warmth which glows in the heavens; and which, though it cannot be seen through the streaming obscurity, is felt and known to be burning behind it. In this spirit Lewis sat with her for a brief space of time ; and, after exchanging a few enquiries and observations, chiefly with her uncle, he rose to take his leave.

“It will be a happiness for us to see you at Lawford still, *sometimes*,” said Mr. Prior, looking with solemn meaning in his face, “as you seem to understand the footing upon which even our minister must be received into this solitary mansion.”

Mr. Bannatyne bowed respectfully, as he pressed the old gentleman’s hand, but made no reply. He then turned to Rebecca, and took her trembling fingers, while the uncle walked to the window, that he might not seem to observe them.

"I could wish you to come again to us, Lewis," said Rebecca, in the half whisper of suppressed feeling. "Come *sometimes* still as —as my uncle's friend and mine. The pale tenants of the cloisters themselves, in former ages, who, like me, had no hopes but towards another world, might, at times, as we read, be permitted a distant correspondence with those on whom their thoughts had once dared to dwell,—those, at least, who ministered in the service of Heaven. But, may I beg——"

She withdrew her hand hastily, without finishing the sentence, as if the touch of his fingers, and her increasing emotion, had suddenly alarmed her; and, turning upon him a melancholy glance, as formerly, the two, without further speech, sadly separated.

These visits were repeated at intervals of some distance, and became again, to both, a sort of dubious and dull consolation; for it was long before they could get accustomed to each other's society; he obliged to view her in this new and melancholy light, and she with the consciousness that he, on whom her

thoughts involuntarily dwelt, must think of her only in association with the most humiliating calamity that can afflict humanity. Yet did not mutual admiration at all abate, but seemed rather to increase, with increasing experience of each other's disinterested resignation. But then as the smothered flame of affection burned purer, and more intensely, a kind look, or a tender word, would often kindle feelings which were almost too trying for mere humanity.

A laborious attention to the duties of his ministry became now more than ever the consolation and the refuge of the unfortunate Bannatyne; and the solemn last words of his sage predecessor seemed yet to sound in his ears like the voice of inspiration. His people, and particularly his wealthier parishioners, while they held him in veneration, beyond what his years demanded, yet looked upon him almost with something like wonder. He now lived so secluded and companionless, a bachelor still, in the large empty manse, of which he had taken possession on the death of Mr. Kinloch; and his deportment was so serious, yet his

address was so mild; he was so reserved, except upon matters of duty; and his comings and goings to and from the solitary hollow of Lawford seemed accompanied with such sadness, if not mystery, that, even while he was reverenced as the best of men, he was looked upon with a species of undefined sympathy.

Meantime, his acquaintance with Rebecca became more affectionately unreserved, as time and intercourse strengthened their own minds and increased their mutual confidence. Endeavouring to regard each other as brother and sister, their tenderness was unspeakable; and even the good and venerable Mr. Prior himself seemed to delight in witnessing their more than earthly affection. But though they were all in all to each other, even in this strange situation of consented celibacy, anxiety and dread regarding what might happen hereafter, would often throw a damp over their warmest feelings, that still contended against the constant restraints of their watchfulness over themselves.

The peculiar predicament of these two interesting persons began now to be partly sur-

mised by the people of the neighbourhood, and the very rustics, who lived among the hills above, as well as the villagers of Hillington near, would watch them curiously as they were occasionally seen together ; for the prying whisper of rustic interest, as well as of sympathetic feeling and respect, had prepared every one who passed them, for some understanding of their strange situation. It was thought melancholy to see two persons, so young and so formed for happiness and for each other, walking distantly together as the tenderest and the most constant of friends, yet relatively so placed ; — as they went on heartlessly towards the village, on occasion, the grave uncle of Rebecca stepping on in solemn taciturnity by their side ; or as they might sometimes be observed from the high road above the hollow, on any quiet lowering evening, “ in the gloaming,” with looks of disappointed yet resigned affection, taking their lingering stroll by themselves, on the low level sod by the black rippling streamlet of Lawford.

“ Surely, Rebecca,” he said to her, one even-

ing, as they wandered together, “surely it is at least possible you may be deceiving yourself regarding this dread malady of your family, and that you may be thinking of it too seriously? Nay, pray do not stop me this once, for it is seldom we have such an opportunity of conversing unwitnessed; and we are sufficiently intimate now, methinks, to reason this subject with calmness.”

“ Believe me, Lewis,” she replied, earnestly, “you will find that it would be much safer for us both to avoid a subject of such painful delicacy: I could wish that you had not even now hinted at it. But think you I could have decided upon treating you as I did, from your first coming to Lawford — that I could afterwards have strung up my resolution to drive you from our house, by making a disclosure that was to be the means of separating us for ever? Think you that I could have determined upon degrading myself in your eyes, and giving up all that is dear to a woman’s heart, and that I could have lived so long this sad life, to end but with the grave, having neither present joy

nor future hope, without having passed many an hour of heavy reflection, upon all that I know of the past, and all that I dare not think of in the future ; or without a sore struggle with the feelings of nature ? It is better, my friend, much better, for us never again to speak upon this subject."

" And yet, Rebecca," he replied, in the subdued tone of sadness which was now become habitual to him, " as I walk for hours together in my solitary apartment in Hillington Manse, pondering on the sad circumstances of our peculiar fate, I sometimes think that we may be all this while deceiving ourselves by imaginary terrors, and that the time may come when we may conclude that we have been needlessly suffering under a scaring delusion. When I reflect, Rebecca, on the superiority of your mind, as daily evinced in the delightful conversations we have enjoyed together, I cannot think that such a heart and such an intellect should ever become wrecked under so awful a visitation. Pray allow me to go on : my thoughts are awakened by my own experience of you. No,

Rebecca, I will not continue to believe that such a fate can ever be in reserve for so gifted a mind as I have found yours to be."

" My dear and valued friend," she said, her voice trembling from her feelings, " do not, by your persuasion, try to unsettle my thoughts. Would you have me to confess to you, with an unguarded tongue, what mine own heart feels when you are absent from me, and when the leaden spirit of solitude and seclusion comes with dead oppression over my sinking heart ? Would you have me, Lewis, to speak of a woman's feelings, whose own bosom is unable to carry her bursting affections ?"

" I pray you calm this emotion, Rebecca, and let us still discuss this matter, painful though it be. My mind misgives me upon the subject of your apprehensions, from every day's observation; and I may not lightly encourage you in a fancy so exceedingly serious, if it bears the slightest appearance of delusion."

" And think you, Lewis," she continued, " that, during the long progress of this sore trial, I have not meditated upon the melancholy cases

of my ancestors, for ten generations bygone, and reasoned upon every view of the painful subject, until my heart became faint with the intensity of my own reflections ; and yet I could see no way of escape from the sacrifice required of me ; but by a weak reliance upon a bare possibility, or a wilful dereliction from that principle, by which, in the strength of Heaven, I trust I shall always be guided. But I am the last, and *I shall be the last*, of an unhappy race ! alas ! unhappy, indeed ! " she repeated, her voice sinking again into its former tone of reflective pathos ; " for the amiable and the virtuous have become involved, through me, in the meshes of our private calamities. Forgive me, Lewis : I know that it has been my fate to be the destroyer even of your peace ; I am aware that you will hereafter say, it had been happy for us had we never met. Had that been the case, I might have borne my private regrets with comparative resignation."

" Rebecca, you may be bearing griefs which Heaven has not laid upon you. I would, and will, bear with you myself — bear with you,

and share with you whatever sorrows it may please Providence to cause you to suffer, in reality and in truth — but this sad anticipation of evil, this prospective grief, is, forgive me, Rebecca, it is wearing you to the grave."

"Oh, my friend, do not insist upon this fancy! you are wandering from the point about which I would speak to you. I know my own situation : I am resigned to my fate — a fate which, sooner or later, is as sure to be mine as it has been of my ancestors — but you, your path of duty is different. It is now fit, Lewis, that you should, from henceforth, consider me as I am, and as I am to be ; and seek for yourself another destiny."

"What strange language is this, Rebecca?"

"It is proper language, Lewis ; these are the words of truth and soberness. Listen to me : why should two be miserable when the hand of Heaven is laid only upon one? Why will you voluntarily extend the afflictions of Providence farther than God himself has designed them to extend? Nay, patience, sir, and I will explain. Since you and I can never

be united, oh, my friend ! let your thoughts of tenderness be turned to some other object ; consider your duty to yourself, to God whom you serve, to the people of whom you have taken the oversight. Lewis, do not look so, but think of this — think of it for my sake ; and were you — were you once united to one who might be worthy of you, should the unhappy malady of my family at any time overtake me, and my weak reason give way under the decree of Heaven, I might receive from you, as my minister, the comforts and consolations of the gospel of peace. Will you not speak ? ”

“ Rebecca ! do I really hear aright ? am I to receive this torture from you ? ”

“ I beseech you, my friend, to think seriously of what I say. Do not suffer yourself to be thus unhappy in your youth, because *I* am unfortunate : I appeal to yourself, to your sense of duty, and your opportunities of usefulness — I appeal to the religion that you teach, and the God whom you have undertaken to serve. I charge you, in the name of the souls of which

you have taken the charge, and for whom you must give an account at the day of judgment!"

"Rebecca, for mercy's sake, do not speak thus. Can you expect the heart to tear itself asunder by its own act? Think you that even Heaven expects what is inconsistent with the weakness of human nature? Rebecca, my dear Rebecca! promise me not to speak of this subject again."

"I will, Lewis, I will speak of it!" she exclaimed, drying the tears that rained down her cheeks: "I am convinced it is the straight path of duty for us both; and obedience to duty always brings calm to the mind. Think — think of this."

This unexpected proposition — this noble disinterestedness — this sacrifice of self beyond human capability, deeply affected his elevated mind.

A passionate reply was on the minister's tongue, when the approach of Mr. Prior put an end to this scene of agitated excitement.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER long winter had about this time passed over, and again I crept out from my wearisome solitude of Balgownie Brae; for the weather was becoming soft and mild, the green herbage of the field was sprouting lively up from the holms of Clydesdale — the spring sun had entirely melted the snow which had so long rested on the bald summit of Benlomond, and now glinted pleasantly at e'en o'er the fells of Strathblane; for the last blasts of Yule were forgotten in the valleys, and the time of the singing of birds was come.

It was pleasant to me to hear the rejoicings of nature, as, with my leatheren wallet again on my shoulder, and my staff in my hand, I once more “took the road,” and, humming to myself some pleasant madrigal as I went along, or chanting, like the singing-birds around me,

some cheerful and commendable chant, I wandered forth to see my old friends here and there in the world, and to gather up the gleanings of my former adventures.

But not being particularly hurried for time, I, as was my besetting fashion, so lingered about this place and the other; and had, in truth, so many hands to shake, and healths to drink, to this body, and the next body, on my way; that, in spite of my original intention, it was far towards summer before I passed the high road that overlooked the green hollow of Lawford, and the foliage beyond interrupted my view, so that I was almost within the streets of the town, before I had a peep of the romantic old steeple of Hillington.

“ Ye’re welcome, sir,” said the sonsie landlady of the inn, curtsying long before I drew near her door; “ I’m glad to see you in Hillington again, so just step in here to the garden parlour, for I ken you like to hear the birds, and to look out at the bonnie blue hills of Duneiroch. Now, sir, just set ye down in your ain leather chair, while I get the supper ready,

for I hae mickle news to tell you about the gentles of this country."

I had hardly swallowed my broiled chicken, and three fourths of a sweet fresh trout that was set before me; and was just nibbling at a bit of crumpy oaten cake to give a *goût* to my cheese and my dram of brandy, when in came the landlady again, and bustled about me in the kindest manner, expecting that I would give her the pleasure of telling me all the circumjacent gossip which she had been hoarding for me ever since I had formerly left the neighbourhood. It suited my humour, however, by assuming at first a grave taciturnity, to coquet for a time with her evident incontinence of womanly chishmaclaver; but my nature was not so made for cruelty as to continue this long, so at length I allowed her to open upon me all that she had to say.

The first great event which she had to inform me of was, that the Laird of Glauderston's red-haired daughter had actually got a husband at last, and was now fairly married and off; which was a great relief not only to

the old man and all the family in Glaunderston house, but even, in one sense, to the whole village itself; "for," said my landlady, "I have been maid, wife, and widow myself for many years, and I know what it is perfectly weel; but I never heard such a moan and a lamentation for the want of a husband in the course of my life, as was made about the weary disappointments of Miss Nelly M'Gilvray of Glaunderston. But, thank God, she 's married now, and that 's a blessing."

The other part of the landlady's news was, that there had lately come to live in the neighbourhood a very extraordinary and kentspeckle gentleman, whose presence was likely to have more than common influence in certain quarters in the parish, and who, in short, had somehow been known to Mr. Prior of the holm; but, at all events, he had already, more than any of their neighbours, their minister alone excepted, got a footing among the secluded family at Lawford.

My landlady gave me a very strange account of this gentleman, such as made it difficult for

me, for a considerable time, to judge what his real character actually was, and what were likely to be the effects of his increasing intercourse with persons so reserved in their habits, and generally so retired as both the Priors and their friend Mr. Bannatyne were well known to be. But what the worthy woman said of him amounted to this — that he was a long-headed and a travelled man; “for he had been,” she said, “far abroad, at Seringapatam, and the Cove of Cork, and such like remarkable places— had seen the burning hills all the way in Mesopotamia, and elephants carrying castles on their backs over the great mountains of Amsterdam !”

Whether this gentleman had once been a voyager with Captain Cook, or travelled with the great Baron Munchausen himself, was not clearly determined; but certainly he must have seen a deal of killing and slaying abroad, for he talked of the taking off of heads, and the destruction of whole cities, with extraordinary coolness and complacency; and hardly less so of the unfortunate inmates of the various prisons

and magdalens on the Continent, which it had been also his fortune to visit in his time.

This was a sort of information, however, that it had often been my fortune to be obliged to unravel; and thus much I, at least for the present, was able to conclude;—that this Mr. or Dr. Heywood (for that was the name of the new resident) was no common person, at least for his information and his opinions. I gathered, further, from the whole tone of the landlady's remarks, that his presence had a decidedly favourable effect upon the spirits of those for whom I felt so much interest.

Dr. Heywood, as I afterwards found, had actually practised as a physician abroad; but having, on his return, made choice of this hilly and romantic parish for air, had now retired to live in it upon the fortune which he had acquired. The family of the Priors was too conspicuous and remarkable for him to remain long unacquainted with whatever was known regarding their character and history; and, having procured first an introduction to the minister, he was soon enabled, through him, to form some

acquaintance with a family about whom his curiosity, from what he had learned, had been strongly excited.

Hearing that the secluded family at Lawford had at length added this gentleman to the narrow circle of its acquaintance, I took some pains to ascertain his character; especially as a manifest influence over all became the result of his visits. I thought him at first too much of a theorising philosopher, who made his information subservient to those fancies which the very benevolence of his disposition had led him to indulge. Upon getting into some intimacy with him, I found, however, that he had only accustomed himself to reason too generally; to view human beings too much in masses; and to draw grand conclusions from the comparisons of surfaces and the computation of numbers. He seemed to me to think too highly of what frail man could do in shaping the intricate course of his destiny, and in guiding the helm of his own happiness. His mind, occupied with the sum total of conclusions, rested little on individuality, and was impatient of de-

tail; so, though his information was undoubtedly great, and his purposes noble, he had seen so much of mankind, that he could hardly be said to see clearly *a man*.

The singular situation of the minister and Rebecca, which was now no secret in the neighbourhood, had so impressed Dr. Heywood, that the excessive delicacy of the one subject, and the evident shrinking from it of all concerned, could not hinder him from gradually approaching it. Mr. Prior was at first almost offended with his freedom; but as the Doctor began by referring to the common opinions regarding different races and tribes of men, and gradually slid into observations upon the peculiarities which have been observed to run in families, until they assumed very decided characteristics, the old gentleman became interested, and, to the alarm of Rebecca, seemed even to encourage the discussion. Subsequently the Doctor ventured to throw out some remarks upon the cases of several former members of the Prior family, which astonished the old gentleman, both from the acquaintance which the former showed with

its history, and the use he made of the facts adduced. One of these facts was, that not every one, but only a majority, of Mr. Prior's ancestors had been afflicted with the fearful malady of his house; and that it never, except in two cases, had appeared throughout the female line.

The effect which the mention of some of these things, and of the hints that followed them, had upon Rebecca one evening, when, in presence of Mr. Bannatyne, the Doctor proceeded to urge them, was such as instantly to put a stop to the conversation at that time. Lewis, however, and even Mr. Prior himself, began to awake as from a dream; and, though Rebecca remonstrated strongly with her uncle, against again disturbing her tranquil melancholy, by the discussion of a subject upon which she dared not think with the least hope, the very night following was appointed for talking it over with the anxious physician.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE never was before seen, in the fruitful month of September, so peculiar a day as that which followed the one on which was made to Rebecca the unexpected communication recorded in the last chapter; for who would expect the gusty blasts of March, or the shining showers of April, in the teeming season of autumn, or to see the clouds and storms of dreary winter sweeping athwart green meadows, and shaking the trees in the woods of Lawford, while the birds of summer yet sang in the boughs, and the foliage had not yet taken the painter's tint, which renders it more interesting while prognosticating its speedy decay?

It had been the habit of Mr. Prior, in watching over the mental health of his beloved niece, whenever he saw her in any unusual state of spirits, to drive off to some distance, exploring all the cross-roads and long valleys within twenty miles, and lingering only where nature

was most attractive, but seldom visiting the great towns, or mixing with any offered society. On the morning of this day, he observed that the equilibrium of her spirits was evidently disturbed. She confessed that she had rested ill through the night; for hope, in spite of all the efforts of her reason, had begun to intrude with flattering *perhapses* into her fancy, and her inward dread was, of allowing her thoughts to be further troubled by wishes and reasonings which might only end in adding bitterness to a fate to which she had thought herself quite reconciled. But the variegated scenery of a favourite part of the country, through which her considerate uncle judiciously brought her, together with his own cheerful conversation by the way, tended materially to refresh and settle her mind; and even the strange changeableness of the autumnal day, and the picturesque drifting of the occasional storm along the speckled plain spread out beneath her, had that grateful effect upon her excited thoughts, which the everlasting language of pure nature has ever had upon minds of great sensibility.

They had proceeded a considerable way by a route that was rather new to them, and were returning towards home as the day advanced, when, as they proceeded slowly down a narrow entangled lane, into which Mr. Prior, who prided himself upon his knowledge of localities had led them, their conversation was interrupted by the coachman stopping short to inform them that the road on which they were was no thoroughfare, and terminated, as he could see, in a private property in front of them ; that, in fact, they had lost their way ; and that he could not even turn the carriage conveniently, without proceeding forward, and getting within the gate of this unknown demesne.

“ We cannot possibly take such a liberty,” said Mr. Prior, with his habitual reserve and delicacy.

“ I dare not attempt to turn here, sir,” said the man.

“ Know you the name of the property before us ?” said Mr. Prior, looking out.

“ I think it must be Bicknel Hill, sir,” said

the man, “owned by Mr. Dryburgh, that is, Dryburgh of Bicknel.”

“Surely I have heard that name,” said Mr. Prior, repeating it. “Rebecca, my dear,” he added, turning to his niece, “is not that the name of the person whom we heard had some-time ago married the daughter of our neighbour M‘Gilvray of Glaunderston.”

“It was some such name,” she said: “but, for Heaven’s sake, sir, do not let us go within a mile of such people. That horrid woman will be sure to fasten herself upon us in some way, if we enter within the gate.”

“Let not that trouble you, Rebecca,” said Mr. Prior, good-humouredly; “the lady’s father and I are old neighbours. Drive on, John;”—and in five minutes after they were stopped by a small lodge, out of which issued an old grumbling man, who, with some difficulty, admitted them through the rickety gate into the old avenue of Bicknel Hill.

When within the gate, they found the ill-kept road so narrow, and the elm trees of the straight avenue so close, that it was impossible

for them, with either decency or safety, to turn and go back, without proceeding to the very door of the old mansion ; and this, of course, required Mr. Prior, in spite of the dread of Rebecca, to send his compliments to Mr. Dryburgh, of whom he had a slight knowledge, to apologise for his intrusion, and to enquire his way.

As they proceeded forward, however, both found their attention arrested by many objects around them, which they could not possibly have expected to find in any civilised country-gentleman's property. Such a tampering, by abused art, with graceful nature, appeared in every thing they saw, that the assemblage of inanimate objects, when taken together, assumed a positive expression ; and, in spite of Mr. Prior's grave disposition, he could hardly forbear laughing aloud at the *tout ensemble* of the laird of Bicknel's house and property. The scene into which they had thus accidentally been introduced was certainly an unlooked-for diversion to both : such an *olla podrida* of whatever was useful and ornamental, natural

and artificial, graceful and ridiculous, all hidden among the leafy luxury of nature, or staring out in the pedantic elaboration of art, as appeared in the grounds of Mr. Dryburgh, never, perhaps, was before seen. The place was all wild, and yet it was all garden, and park, and plantation: still it was neither; but a confusion of clumps, hedges, gates, grottoes, whale's jaw-bones joined like Gothic arches, wooden lions grinning at the gates, with black painted eyes and red mouths, shooting Cupids, and brawny figures that ladies dared not look at, summer seats and bowers such as never was before seen or invented. How the man could have got together such a collection of absurdities, in this inland quarter of Scotland, as encumbered and made ridiculous his unfortunate grounds, was perfectly astonishing; but, from the figure-head-like objects that were stuck on the ends of an old wall that flanked the garden, as well as the mast-like flagstaffs, and ropes, and⁴ twirling vanes, that shot up from among the foliage at the end of the stables, the proprietor might have been taken for a retired port-admiral,

while the judgment was again disconcerted by numbers of wooden men and women, standing in various attitudes, at the angles and entrances, reminding one of the painted Neptunes and shameless Venuses who adorn those delectable retreats of elegance, the tea-gardens of the metropolis.

Nor was the house itself, a tall, old-maidish form of a building, much less laughable. It seemed perfectly riddled with small holes of windows, which seemed to grin down upon the beholder up and up to the very slates of the roof. And then, when the eye turned itself aloft so far, a crowd of long toppling chimneys appeared, bristling up into the very clouds, and filling the spectator with alarm lest every blast of wind, where wind was no rarity, should cause these ill-formed giants, who carried their heads so high, to precipitate themselves down, through the roof, upon the unfortunate tenants of this dangerous mansion.

But, as if the building were not already sufficiently ridiculous, the present laird, on the occasion of his marriage, had caused to be

placed, in front of the door, two stumpy round pillars, of the composite order, and other absurdities, by way of a porch, which entirely darkened several of the small windows, and had united at the foot of each gable end two low hulking round houses of a different-coloured stone to the rest of the building, which he chose to call wings, but which, as the wings of Mercury were placed at his feet, seemed to have the same congruity with the tall figure above them.

The sight of these various *outré* objects was so amusing to Rebecca, as well as to her uncle, that it quite put her in a gay humour, and made her almost wish for, instead of dreading, a sight of the newly-married couple within, who owned so odd a wilderness of monstrosities.

Yet, when they arrived at the entrance, and she observed the bustle that their approach had created within, and Mrs. Dryburgh already planted at one of the port-hole windows, and afterwards at the entrance, she felt some of her former dread at the idea of the officious familiarity of such a horror.

"Bless me, Miss Prior, who could have thought to see you coming of your own accord to visit me and my husband, at Bicknel Hill!" exclaimed the lady, coming forth in person, and speaking from between the stumpy pillars of the porch: "really it is such an honour. But, to be sure, when one is married, they have a right to expect ——"

"We are most happy to see you, madam," interrupted Mr. Prior, politely; "but, on this occasion, the visit is somewhat accidental, for, in truth, we had lost our way, when we found ourselves in the lane leading to your house, and, at this hour in the afternoon, must be contented with enquiring for your health, and the shortest way to Lawford, without doing ourselves the pleasure of alighting."

"It's not possible, Mr. Prior," said the lady, with true Scotch vulgarity of tone, "that ye're going away from my door in that manner, without coming in and wishing me weel, now when I am married. The laird, my husband, would tak it quite as an affront, sir, as weel as your old neighbour, my father, the laird of

Glaunderston, if he were to hear of such a thing ; and look you," she added, "holding out her hand, elegantly, to catch the rain drops, "there's another shower coming on. Ye must really come into my house, and see what like my gudeman is, Miss Prior. John ! Jenny ! Jamie !" she screamed to the staring servants, "what do you stand there glowering for ? Run, this moment, an' seek the laird. Ye'll find him, nae doubt, on the Parnassus mount, up there beside the nine Mooses, putting up that long-legged image o' the blind 'Pollo."

The servants scampered off different ways ; and Mr. Prior, finding it vain to argue with the classical lady, who, as she said, would take no denial, now, as she *was* married, alighted with Rebecca, and, following their hostess into a small old-fashioned apartment, lighted with seven or eight holes called windows, were soon after gratified with a sight of the tasteful Mr. Dryburgh.

" This is my gudeman," said Lady Bicknel, introducing the classical laird, in the person of a rosy-cheeked, fair-haired, lively man, with a

short neck, round shoulders, and arms that reached almost to his knees, and altogether as unclassically formed a being as ever offered to set up a graven image in honour of the ancients. The elegant admirer of Phidias and Praxiteles was economically dressed in fustian and corduroy; an orange-coloured cotton handkerchief, rolled like a bell-rope, served to fill up the space between his chin and his shoulders; leather leggings, bespattered with mud, encased his brawny limbs, and these were shod by a pair of enormous brogues, which increased the height of the wearer by at least an inch.

“ Hoo are ye, Mr. Prior ? ” said the bluff laird, with a genuine Scotch bow; “ and how do ye do, Miss Prior : dear me, mem, I never could get a sight of you, except it might be in Hillington kirk ; an’ ye’re aye sae mim an’ sae mute, that I little thought to hae seen you stepping across my floor-head at Bicknel Hill, although we are sic near neighbours, as my gudewife says.”

“ Deed, gudeman,” said Lady Bicknel, “ it’s my fault entirely ; for I should hae renewed

acquaintance wi' Miss Prior; but really when folks get married, they have no time for any thing: but will ye not be seated, Miss Prior? Na, na, ye must stay and take a snack: here, John! Jenny! Geordie! what are ye standing there for? bring in the luncheon this moment. Ye 'll excuse me, Miss Prior, ye see I 'm a plain woman, an' we 're a' plain country folks here at Bicknel Hill."

There is nothing that qualifies the manifold afflictions from country kindness, from persons that are in general a *horreur*, but the disarming consideration that it is well meant; and in this spirit did Mr. Prior and Rebecca suffer themselves to be set down upon long-backed chairs, having leathern seats, with a lunch placed before them, principally consisting of a large dish of coarse cold boiled beef, which would have served as a pic-nic for a dozen squires of the Caledonian Hunt; and the pressing solicitations to eat and drink, by the laird and lady within, seemed to be seconded by the noisy voice of the storm without, which, by this time, began to batter against the windows, and to whirl about

among the lofty chimneys of the rocking man-sion.

"Take another wing o' the pullet, Miss Rebecca," insisted the lady: "the storm frae the hills makes people hungry. Dear me, I declare ye're doing nothing! Now, that was just the way with me before I was married: but now, bless you, Miss Prior, I have aye such an appetite, I'm quite ashamed o' myself. Laird," she cried, across to her husband, whose mouth was too full to answer her, "I'll just take another striffen o' the beef: really Bicknel Hill is a hungersome place."

"What did you think of my grounds as you came along, Mr. Prior?" said the laird, after a most polite hob-nob with the old gentleman, which helped materially to clear his own mouth.

"You have certainly contrived to introduce considerable variety into them," said Mr. Prior, politely.

"But don't you think, sir," said the lady, striking in across the table, "that my gudeman there is rather too much given to graven images

of heathen idolatry, whilk you may have seen sentinelled about the grounds up and down ? I assure you, Mr. Prior,— since we married ladies may be allowed to speak among you learned gentlemen, — that it 's a real calamity, that I cannot take a walk in my own policy, or turn a corner wi' safety, but up starts a great houghy fallow at the back of every bush ; some Hector or Keelis, wi' hardly a tag to cover his nakedness, holding a great swurd or spear threateningly o'er my head, as if he meant to fell me : it 's really dreadful."

" These are purely matters of taste, madam," answered Mr. Prior, hardly able to suppress laughter.

" And don't you think, sir," added the lady, " that these statue men, and image makers should, for decency's sake, be more liberal of garments to their gods and goddesses, heathen though they be; for I have read in Rollin's Ancient History, that the heathens themselves, before the flood, did not go so perfectly mother-naked ? "

" Hush—sh, my dear," said the learned

Theban of a laird, with an overawing shake of the head ; " it does not do for women to talk so freely of men's affairs."

" Na, deed, laird," said the outspoken lady, " ye need na fash to shake your head at me, for ye mind what a fright I got that moonlight night, coming hame frae the laird o' Libberton's in the howm, wi' naething but Nelly and the lantern. Ye see, Mr. Prior, Nelly and I had crossed the fields for shortness, and got into the grounds through a stile just aboon the auld monument that was bigget for the laird's great-grandfather, and were holding on by the moonlight through among the birkis, as canny as kittens, when, just as we turned the dark elbow of a rowan-tree copse, up gets a great Roman gladiawtor between me and the moon, the light whitening him like a sheeted ghaist, and his weapon thrust into our very faces. Lord ! my heart jamp into my mouth, and I scrieght like ane wud ; for, ye see, sirs, I had never seen the image before, and I actually thought the muckle thing would hae jumped down aff the stane, and worried us, that is, poor Nelly an' me. Na,

ye needna laugh, gudeman, for there's Mr. Prior's a considerate man, an' he kens perfectly weel that it's no for married ladies like me, ahem ! to be exposed to thae untoward images."

The laird good-naturedly promised that the matter should be considered : but the rain being now over, he would not suffer Mr. Prior to depart without being shown more fully his grounds and gardens. Having, therefore, persuaded the old gentleman to accompany him without, Lady Bicknel and Rebecca were left together.

A momentary feeling of uneasiness came over the latter, when the gentlemen had departed ; for which, however she blamed herself, when she contrasted her own character with that of her hostess : still, in order to prevent any unpleasant allusions, she adroitly tried to engage her in conversation about the tasteful beauty of the grounds at Bicknel Hill.

But people like Rebecca are far less artful than they think themselves, when brought in contact with such as Mrs. Dryburgh, who had

too much of the woman in her to suffer such an opportunity as this to pass, without the enjoyment of a little female triumph over her serious neighbour, in the good fortune of her own marriage. After a few passes of fencing talk, accompanied with a look of extraordinary sweetness and kindness, she thus began upon the sensitive Rebecca : —

“ And hoo is your health noo, Miss Prior ? ye ’ll excuse me; but although my father, the laird of Glaunderston, or my husband, the laird of Bicknel, canna just hold up their heads wi’ the Priors o’ Lawford, yet, as a neighbour and an auld acquaintance, Miss Rebecca, I ’ve had a great concern for you ; an’, dear me, we all thought that ye would have been *married* long ago ; but there ’s nae signs o’ that, that I can hear of. Noo, ye see, there ’s me, that ’s married, an’ in my ain house, an’ likely to hae a family o’ my ain, ahem ! — dear me, Miss Prior, but ye ’re looking quite auld-like, as I may say ; ye ’re surely no’ in gude health — an’ hoo is Mr. Bannatyne ? ”

“ Mr. Bannatyne, madam ? ” said Rebecca,

her face colouring at the other's hypocritical impertinence — “ I don't understand you.”

“ Hoot, ye understand me weel enough, Miss Prior, an' ye'll just excuse my freedom, but ye ken I was aye a plain-spoken body, an' really I canna help speaking to you about the minister, for he does not do by you as I thought he would. Does he still come to see you now and then?”

“ I think, Mrs. Dryburgh, you might have more delicacy and good senset han to ——”
Rebecca could not proceed.

“ It is nothing but concern *for you*, Miss Rebecca, that makes me speak, so ye need not take it the least amiss,” said the lady, looking with piteous kindness on the agitated girl; “ an' really the minister appears to use you so — but I would not say *a word* ill of a minister; yet Mr. Bannatyne has so long — ye 'll excuse me, Miss Prior, but I am a married woman now, and have a right to speak to young folks. Dear me, how ill you look! — but you had always a pale face — take half a glass o' wine?”

" If you have any thing to say, Mrs. Dryburgh, let me hear it at once ! "

" I see ye 're flurried a little, Miss Prior," added the coarse woman maliciously, and enjoying her revenge on Rebecca for rivalling her successfully with the handsome minister of Hillington — " but, ye see, us married women *ought* to give advice to young inexperienced ladies; and really Mr. Bannatyne, although he was once a sort of joe of my own, is so long about this marriage — if he *mean* a marriage — that, if ye would take my advice, Miss Prior — — "

" Mrs. Dryburgh," interrupted Rebecca, while she strove to master her feelings, " I know not why you should make observations to me about Mr. Bannatyne: he visits Lawford as my uncle's friend and mine ; and any advice regarding him, or his conduct, addressed to me, is unnecessary and inapplicable."

" Weel, that's very sensibly spoken, Miss Prior; quite sensible, as I am happy to perceive — an' certainly ye must ken better than I do; but, ye'll excuse me — the world is an observable

world. Indeed, after the talk that has been talked about you and the minister — ”

“ What talk? — what is your meaning, Mrs. Dryburgh?”

“ Why, ye ken, Miss Rebecca, people *will* speak: but I have aye maintained, on your part, that although your forbears the auld Priors o’ Lawford — that is, your father, and grandfather, and great-grandfather, maybe, as I’ve heard my ain father tell, fell rather into a demented way, yet surely the minister — dear me, your face is grown like a sheet again — I hope ye’re no gaun to faint in my house. Is there naebody there?” screamed the lady — “ John! Jenny! Geordie!”

“ I’m better — I’m better now: do not call any one!” urged Rebecca, recovering herself by an energetic effort — “ it is only the consequence of my long ride. Now, Mrs. Dryburgh, say, in one word, what you mean by these hints.”

“ There now — I’m glad to see you come to yourself again,” said Lady Bicknel, also recovering — “ an’ ye speak very sensibly — I

aye said ye could talk as sensibly as *I could*; an' that that could never be the minister's reason for standing aff an' on in that strange sort of way — meaning, Miss Rebecca, by hints? Noo, ye need na be the least flurried; just put that mouthful of wine over — ”

“ Mrs. Dryburgh,” said Rebecca, indignantly, and pushing away the offered wine, “ this indelicate freedom with me and my family is what I cannot excuse.”

“ Odsake, Miss Prior, dinna speak sae sharply,” said Lady Bicknel, astonished at Rebecca’s scornful energy; “ ye’ll remember that I’m a married woman, and all I have to say is, that, if ye take my advice, ye’ll just tell the minister yourself, plump an’ plain, suppose he *be* a minister — that although, as the folk say, you may be rather — ”

“ Mrs. Dryburgh, what are you aiming at? It is not fit that I should listen to language like this! ” — and, rising as she spoke, while her eyes flashed with scorn, she was proceeding to leave the room.

“ Sit doon — just sit doon, Miss Rebecca

— odsake but ye're proud an' pettish. I beg your pardon a hundred an' fifty times, although, being a married woman, ye might take my advice when it's all for your gude. But now set ye down, an' smooth your face, for there's your uncle and my gudeman coming back. Odsake, if the laird ken'd that I had wagged a tongue at ony o' the Prior family, I would never hear the last o't. Noo, just forgi'e me, an' let us be friends — ahem! What a fine afternoon it's turned out!"

As the good lady spoke the last sentence, Mr. Prior and the laird entered the room, to the great relief of Rebecca; and the old gentleman, seeing at a glance that something had been said to ruffle his niece, managed to get off; and in a few minutes they were again driving rapidly towards their own pleasant valley at Lawford.

CHAPTER IX.

THE autumnal day, hitherto so variable, had, as has been said, brightened into unusual beauty, as Mr. Prior and Rebecca rode on towards their home. The richness on the landscape, of the afternoon tints, was heightened and enhanced by the shining freshness which the departed storm had left; and the clouds, having cleared away over the nearest range of hills, appeared rolled together in the far distance, and, mixing in contrasting masses with the partial lights shining on the blue summits of the mountains, gave a picturesque grandeur to the still stormy horizon.

As they were driven along, Mr. Prior, as usual, pointed out to Rebecca every peep of nature in sky and landscape that seemed grand or interesting; but he remarked, with concern, that the mind of his niece had been disturbed to a much greater degree than she would confess; for the wide range of “meadow green

and mountain grey," now lying gay beneath them, had lost all charm for her, and every effort of his failed to arouse her from that tendency to abstraction, which experience had taught him to regard, in any of his family, with a sympathetic and apprehensive anxiety. The habitual delicacy, however, with which her good uncle had always treated her, prevented him, at this time, from touching upon the cause of her disquietude; and they arrived at home individually brooding in secret over the painful idea, that the world had rejected them as social beings, and already talked of them as ultimately doomed to the melancholy seclusion of mental alienation.

The expected visitors did not come to dinner: but this, so far from being a disappointment to Rebecca, seemed to be a relief to her; for she evidently looked with dread upon the further discussion of a subject with which she thought hope could never be associated. At length a carriage was heard to proceed down the avenue; but, by this time, Mr. Prior was left quite alone, for Rebecca had retired for some

time, and, when the gentleman arrived, was nowhere to be found. As it was on her account, chiefly, that the meeting had been appointed, Mr. Bannatyne, in particular, felt much disappointed at her absence, and at the evident gloom upon her uncle's countenance.

The servant who had been sent to request the attendance of Rebecca now returned to say, that she was neither in her room, nor any where else in the house. Mr. Prior felt strangely at this intelligence, and rose and walked hastily about the apartment. Doctor Heywood was disconcerted, and knew not what to think; Mr. Bannatyne rose also, walked to the window, and, drawing the curtains aside, looked abroad upon the lawn, upon which the early moon was now shining dimly. A thought struck him as he gazed down the woody hollow of Lawford, and traced the sinuosities of the streamlet that here and there reflected the watery rays of the moon; and, taking his hat, he was soon in the lawn behind the mansion.

Some impulse led him to take the road towards the height beneath which was the dark

chasm into which gushed the streamlet of Lawford, from the solitary pond above, called the Lady's Linn. Rebecca seemed always to have avoided this spot, and *he* had never been so near it before. The rain of the early part of the day had swollen the waters of the linn, which tumbled with a heavy and saddening sound into the rocky chasm below. Lewis was moved, and contemplated the place as the mysterious emblem of some hidden destruction. But this, he thought, must be fancy only, and the fancy oftener deludes poetical minds into imaginations of sorrow than of joy.

Leaving the falling waters boiling with a hollow sound beneath, Lewis mounted the height to see the linn ; but, though the evening was delicious, and the idea of Rebecca had led him abroad, the hope had left him of finding her so far from home as this. He could not resist the impulse, however, of visiting the linn, now as it was so near. The trees that crowned the height were scattered and irregular, and the spot had altogether a neglected appearance ; but its very wildness made it more picturesque

to Lewis, when, emerging from among the bushes, the open expanse of this hidden lake, made light by the reflection of the moonbeams, now burst upon him.

The solitude of the place was perfect: even the hum of the falling waters below, deadened as it was upon the ear by the intervening thick trees that bordered the lake, seemed to deepen the idea of absolute seclusion; and the still small voice of Nature alone was heard to echo through the woods around. Lewis was absorbed, as, threading his way among the trees, he traced the green margin of the lake. He had forgotten every thing but some vague and melancholy associations with this holy place, when, as he proceeded musingly forward, he found himself suddenly grasped by the arm, and, looking round, after the start that such an encounter gave him, he perceived the pale features of Rebecca, her person wrapped in a mantle, and her dark eyes gazing on him with unusual animation.

“ What seek you here, Lewis ? ” she said,

quickly ; “ who taught you the way to the Lady’s Linn ?”

“ Rebecca, this is strange,” he replied : “ why do I find you wandering on this ominous spot ?”

“ Do not be alarmed, my friend,” she answered, calmly ; “ there is nothing remarkable in an outcast like me loving to brood, in solitude, over sad thoughts, particularly when my mind is disquieted by this coarse world, and my fancy wanders towards another state of being. But I am glad you are come — very glad it is you that have come to me at this moment ; ” and, as she earnestly spoke, she grasped closely his arm.

“ Then come home with me, Rebecca,” he said, kindly, and returning her pressure ; “ they wait for us at the mansion.”

“ Not yet, my friend, not yet : let us discourse here an instant. Tell me candidly — tell me, Lewis — did ever a thought come across you — a temptation — to — to suicide ? Nay, start not. ’Tis not so uncommon. Death, *as such*, may not be an evil. *Life*, we know, often is.”

“ How can you talk thus, Rebecca ? Let us leave immediately this solitary place.”

“ Why should we fear to talk of any thing ? See you that small stream that murmurs at the upper end of the linn, how it struggles and foams through obstructing and dividing rocks ; how it leaps and bubbles and brawls in its short course ; and how quiet it is when it reaches the depths of that placid linn, on the smooth bosom of which the clear moonbeams now sleep so sweetly. ’Tis the old tale, Lewis — struggling time, and quiet eternity.”

“ You are melancholy to-night, Rebecca ; you are not as usual ; and here the air is cold. Let us hence to the house.”

“ You will not, surely, like the worldling, run from me, because I am sorrowful ! ” she said, mournfully. “ Is not our friendship, our *more than* friendship, cemented and strengthened even by melancholy ? Nay, let me speak to you, Lewis, as I have always spoken when the sadness of my heart comes upon me. What do you think of the world, which would not allow me to have you, even, for *a friend* ? ”

" Dear Rebecca, do not encourage these melancholy reflections. *Do* come home with me ! There is something awful in this wild spot just now. See you, the moon is under a dark cloud — the trees round these waters assume strange shapes in the gloom ; and the chill breeze begins to moan in the woads, and to sweep up the hollow past us. I know not how you can linger here, for the cold black depths of that still linn make me shudder when I look into it."

" It is you that are fanciful, Lewis, and apt to be uneasy, and scared by this gloom and solitude. Now, as for me, it does me good, when my heart is disquieted, to gaze upon these dead waters ; and when I sit here in the deepening twilight, thinking of the empty idealisms of life, and the numerous disappointments of warm-hearted youth,— of the penalties connected with that very reason of which we think so highly, and the sadness that mingles even with truth itself ; — I obtain resignation to an anticipated state that the obtuse world abuses with its pity ; nay, I feel almost a happiness in my hopeless

equanimity, which is only disturbed by such vain discussions as was this night intended ; and when, on this spot, I have solemnly made up my mind to the sacrifice of every tender hope, my prayers to Heaven for mental tranquillity mingle with the roar of the falling waters, as they tumble heavily into that chasm among the rocks, — prayers sincerely addressed to the High and Lofty One, that, in my hour of aberration, when reason shall have abandoned this helpless tenement, He will not desert me ; — then, then, my friend, the spirit of my unhappy ancestress, who gave up her struggling soul to her Maker beneath the cold waters of this linn, seems to join in my petition for resignation to the sad fate of my fathers, and to point a ghostly hand, over these woods, towards the heaven above us, where that blessed moon, and the stars that twinkle beside it, cannot hide the glory that is beyond ; and where there remains a rest for the frail victims of earthly calamity."

Lewis stood for a minute, unable to answer ; and then, taking her gently away from the margin of the linn, he said, as they went slowly

down the slope, “ This is a mournful subject, Rebecca, and these are thoughts which I did not expect you to be occupied with this night: but the mind, I know, is a riddle — I feel it in myself; perhaps the highest minds are the most difficult to understand: but allow me to remind you, that, with all supposable acquirements, and all its intensity, the mind is often its own worst enemy, and hugs, with the prejudice of a determined melancholy, the galling chains of its own misery.”

“ Oh, Lewis ! ” she said, and by this time the tears were streaming down her cheeks, “ your very reproof is a pleasure and a blessing to me: but my weakness — my poor — ”

“ Do not speak of weakness, my adored Rebecca,” he exclaimed, now melted with her emotion; “ we never love those who have no weaknesses. Is it not weakness that causes the close embrace of the twining tendril and its supporter, — which, if they must bend under the blast, bend together, — yes, Rebecca, and rise together when the storm is over, and grow together, and bud and blossom together, and

rejoice together in the richness of summer, and shed their leaves together, when winter approaches, and wither together at last, Rebecca,—and die together!"

Tears, and broken sentences, and intruding hopes that were too bright, and apprehensions that were too sad for the contrast, occupied the lovers until they reached the mansion, where the approaching discussion was now involuntarily looked to, as that which was to decide their fate for the rest of their lives.

CHAPTER X.

“ You would not have me, sir,” said Dr. Heywood, addressing Mr. Prior, when all were seated round him, “ begin a formal lecture upon so delicate a subject; particularly as I pretend to advance nothing either very new or recondite, but simply to apply what is known regarding a specific malady to the case, in particular, of this young lady. Ask me, therefore, if you please, what questions you think proper, and I will answer them to the best of my ability.”

“ There is one great principle regarding this point, which, you say, has been universally admitted of late years,” said Mr. Prior, “ which, I confess, has made a deep and even hopeful impression upon my mind ; and that is, that insanity is essentially a bodily or functional derangement only, and so liable to be treated medically, like other maladies. Yet, doctor, you will excuse the scepticism, perhaps of

ignorance, if, accustomed to the terms of metaphysics and the impressions of the world, I attach to the notion of the thinking principle—of that essence which, like the great Being who created it, ‘no man hath at any time seen nor can see,’ *res ipsa*,—an idea so abstract and mysterious, as to make the ministering effectually to a *mind* diseased, a thing hardly consistent with human skill, particularly if, like any other mental peculiarity, it may have been transmitted through several generations.”

“I sympathise with your doubt, sir,” said the Doctor, “and with the feelings that give rise to it: yet, as gout and scrofula, the most inveterate, perhaps, of the other hereditary disorders, have been much overcome by scientific treatment, so has even *manie hérédité*, as Esquirol calls this dreadful malady. But though I by no means flinch from the consideration, so important in the case of this family, that such an affliction may be inherited; knowing that in all exclusive tribes, as the Jewish people, the Quakers, Moravians, &c., as well as in clanships, and among aristocratic

families accustomed to invariable intermarriages among each other, such predisposition has been and is transmitted; yet allow me to say, that persons supposed to be in this unhappy situation are by no means the best judges of the application of any general rule to their own cases; and least of all can they, before such predisposition may have actually manifested itself, be supposed to understand either the doctrine of transmission as likely to affect themselves, or the mode which experience has pointed out of aiding benevolent nature in her usual efforts to free herself from the constitutional derangement to which accident or vice may have, through a series of generations, subjected her."

"Proceed, sir, if you please," said Mr. Prior; "we are all attentive."

"Without troubling you at any length upon so wide a subject," continued the Doctor, "permit me to observe, that, from several facts that have come to my knowledge, in the history of the cases of several individuals of your family, I am obliged decidedly to conclude

that the professional friends of your house, Mr. Prior, and even yourself, have made some capital mistakes, both as to the nature of the malady supposed to be manifested in former generations, and as to the actual danger of your family from it, at the present point of its dreaded transmission. In the first place, allow me to urge upon you, that *mania hérédité* does not invariably proceed in a direct course, as the history of your ancestors will prove, nor even *per saltum* in the second or third generations, as some have maintained; nor is there, indeed, any general rule of transmission that can be relied on as applicable, by anticipation, to the cases of individuals in whom no manifestation of it may yet have taken place, and who may have safely passed the period of majority. It is worthy of consideration, however," added the Doctor, addressing Rebecca, "that this malady, madam, never but in one instance appeared among your ancestors in the female line; and then was associated with circumstances of nervous temperament and worldly trial, that make it by no means decisive as to

its belonging to the hereditary character. But there is another consideration, applying to yourself individually, Miss Prior, to which I attach great weight in this enquiry. That consideration is, that, in the general history of *mania hérédité*, there is hardly a more decided symptom *à priori* of the predisposition in question, nor a more certain precursor of a sudden manifestation of it, than the attempt to conceal, and even the strenuous denial of, such a predisposition, with a uniform reluctance to advert to its history; for I have constantly observed, that craft and deception applied to self and others, is strictly an attribute of insanity, both symptomatic and confirmed; so that the readiness of this lady, sir,"— he addressed her uncle, — "to confess, and to dwell upon, so humbling a calamity, her very dread of its manifestation, and her anxiety to avoid any risk of it, is to me a very strong proof that she is in little danger of its ever breaking in upon the happiness and tranquillity of her accomplished mind. Besides all this, be it observed,— if you will excuse me, madam, for speaking of you in the

third person, in your own presence,— that it is circumstances of trial, always apt to disturb the reasoning faculties, or to take from us the command of our own minds,— that commonly bring into action the hereditary disposition ; and I hesitate not to affirm, in presence of you all, that few females of her years have suffered patiently, and with noble resolution, as Miss Prior has done, a severer trial to a youthful heart, than I know she has endured before this day.”

“ Heaven bless you, sir ! ” exclaimed Mr. Bannatyne, with unconscious emotion, as he hung with increasing interest upon the Doctor’s words. “ You delight me by giving the sanction of your opinion to a consideration which has dwelt upon my mind more than I can now express.”

“ Proceed, sir ! pray proceed ! ” was echoed by all, not even excepting Rebecca.

“ Upon the disposition to this malady generally, since you are pleased thus to listen to me,” continued the Doctor, “ allow me further to remark, that there are several peculiarities

remotely symptomatic of it, which are by no means scarce in the world, and of which most people are little aware. The chief are those unaccountable and fanciful freaks practised by some, which we usually designate by the mild name of eccentricities, and of which, from the physical obliquity in perception and judgment whereon they are founded, those who practise them are unconscious in themselves. Although these absurdities of conduct are generally only a matter of laughter in the world, yet, if unnoticed and unchecked, they have a tendency, in time, to ripen into positive insanity. The seriousness of the circumstances in which you are placed, madam," he added, looking to Rebecca, " obliges me to refer even to this remote and indecisive characteristic of what you dread; but which, so far from having been evinced by you, up to this moment you have shown a consistency and a firmness, in circumstances of trial, that indicates any thing but weakness or obliquity of mental constitution. Nay, further — (since you have placed me in the lecturer's chair, you must hear me out), — even that disposition,

so common in sensitive and intellectual constitutions, which, if indulged in, makes the nearest approach to some kinds of insanity, namely, a tendency to brooding over favourite themes, to fanciful abstractions, and the building up of idealisms, poetical or profound, has, if at all existing in Miss Prior's mind, already withstood, as before observed, such trying circumstances, that I should have little fear of its operation in future, if her abiding good sense enables her to watch over it as a dangerous tendency; and particularly if her situation came to be so changed that the natural feelings of her heart may find their exercise and their repose upon those objects that are applicable to the gushing affections of a woman, and which, excuse me, madam, I give it as my opinion, that it would be as dangerous as it is cruel longer to suppress."

A pause of nearly a minute followed this speech, during which no one had the courage to interrupt the perfect silence. At length, Rebecca, lifting up her head from the position which her state of feeling had caused her to

assume, and fixing her dark eyes upon the Doctor, in a tone of solemn earnestness, said : —

“ Sir, there is one point more, to which you have not yet adverted, which, for aught I know, may come to overturn all you have advanced, and which, in the effect it has uniformly had upon my thoughts, is of too much importance for me to suffer even delicacy itself to prevent me from mentioning, placed, as I am, in the midst of my dearest friends. Is there not, in the very look of those who are hereditarily disposed to this sad affliction, something which the experienced can read with ease, and which as surely indicates the fate that is in reserve for them, as the hazy glare surrounding the watery moon foretells the storm that is brewing in the sky? Now, sir — ” she was unable to finish the sentence.

“ Be explicit, madam; not only your happiness, but that of all present, depends much on the issue of this discussion.”

“ Oh, sir, satisfy me only on this one point,” she exclaimed : “ does not your long experience

among the bereft of reason, enable you to see in my very eyes that peculiar expression which distinguishes the individuals so doomed, as it surely indicates the malady of our unhappy house?—I see, sir, I perceive by your hesitation, that upon this important point you hesitate to answer me;” — and, as she spoke, her large eyes, now sparkling from her emotion, began to fill with tears.

“ You are quite mistaken, madam,” replied the Doctor, a little staggered by her manner and the pointedness of the enquiry, “ in supposing that I am unwilling to answer you upon this point also; although, from the nature of the case, I confess, I could have wished you to rely less upon inference from a fact so liable to fallacy or abuse. I do not mean to deny that there is, to my apprehension, in the eyes of both yourself and your uncle, *something* of that indescribable expression, which is known, to those accustomed to observe it, to accompany the hereditary predisposition to mania. But I have never contended that you are in your generation entirely free from a certain degree-

of that *predisposition*, or that you are not, therefore, more *in danger* on account of it, than if nothing of the kind existed. I have already stated to you the grounds of my opinion, that, admitting a certain degree of that predisposition to exist, it is in your case neither so decided in itself, nor so alarming in its contingent indications, as to warrant the present sacrifice of your happiness. And as to the indication in the eyes, I must say, at a time too solemn for the passing of a mere compliment, that in you it is so blended with the fascinating expression of personal beauty, and the speaking glance of poetic intellect, that I can scarcely detect a single distinct trace of that nameless glare, which, in many that I have seen, was to me so decisive."

Another silence ensued, after the doctor had finished, which was, after a few seconds, broken with a striking effect, by a deep and struggling sigh bursting from Rebecca, as if at that moment a heavy load had just been removed from her heart.

"And may there, indeed, be no real dan-

ger?" she at length exclaimed. " May this awful calamity never, probably never, overtake me? Oh, sir, do not deceive me by raising hopes too flattering to me to think of, after all I have suffered. Dear uncle, dear sir, tell me what you think? Are *you* also convinced, by what seems too delightful for me to listen to?" and by this time she had stepped forward, and was kneeling at her uncle's feet.

" Rise up, my sweet Rebecca, and be not thus agitated," said the old gentleman, much affected: " your feelings are too sharp and powerful for your own tranquillity; but I trust the time is at hand, when this painful consciousness is about to be removed. Be seated, Rebecca, for we have somewhat more to say, and let us calmly come to a conclusion in this matter. Mr. Bannatyne," he added, addressing the minister, who, little less agitated, was by this time standing beside the chair of his Rebecca, — " Mr. Bannatyne, can you forget for a moment your feelings as a near and dear friend to my niece and myself, and tell me, as a man and a minister of the gospel, as dispassionately

as you can, what is your own opinion of the facts and reasonings which our medical friend has just offered to our consideration?"

" You will excuse me, gentlemen," said Mr. Bannatyne, recovering himself, " if I am unable to express myself, at this moment, before a man of science, in terms becoming the serious nature of this enquiry. I must say, in a word, that I am entirely convinced by what the Doctor has advanced, and neither from reason nor feeling can offer one caveat to the qualified and yet decided conclusion to which he has come. There is but a single point to which my reason, from what little enquiry I could make upon this subject, would seek an answer; and the answer I should like, with Doctor Heywood's permission, to receive from the lips of Miss Prior herself."

" Name it, Lewis, name it!" said Rebecca, aroused again into something like alarm.

" It is simply," he replied, " that it has been observed, as I believe, that one of the conscious experiences of those who have eventually been lost in the oblivion of insanity, has been

an occasional strange rapidity of thoughts, over which they had no power, and a wild association of them which they could not resist, with an exaltation of the ordinary qualities of the mind, which was delightful at the time, like the dreams of the opium-eater ; and yet, from the restlessness and anxiety with which it was accompanied, was painful, from the intruding consciousness that it was morbid or unnatural. Rebecca, dare I ask you, if at intervals your experience has been such as this ? ”

“ Alas ! ” said she, mournfully, “ I think it occasionally has been somewhat thus with me. Indeed, that hurry of thought which you describe, I feel at this very moment. And yet, I cannot say — ”

“ My dear sir,” said the Doctor, “ a moment’s consideration will convince you, from analogy, that the very terms of your question are more calculated to create such symptoms, than to explain those that exist. Need I say, that that rapidity and elevation of thought, which is undoubtedly a general precursor of insanity, is so near akin to the ordinary workings and eleva-

tions of mere high intellect, that, were we to take the one for the other, every man of genius might, at times, make such a confession, as in this way would lay him open to the charge of insanity?"

"Then, sir, does this really amount to nothing?" said Rebecca, with another sigh of relief and hope.

"Your own answers prove it, madam," said the Doctor, taking her kindly by the hand. "An intellect like yours is to be guided, not goaded; and feelings like yours are to be allowed to gush forth towards those you love, lest they burst the bosom in which they cannot be confined, and take captive the reason which would check them in vain. Heaven bless you, madam, for you ought to be blessed," said the Doctor, becoming almost affected as he looked at her, — "blessed with all those domestic endearments that are suited to the cravings of female affection."

A pause of some minutes here occurred; for the parties concerned seemed to anticipate the result of the whole, and were overpowered

with astonishment at the change of prospect that had burst so suddenly upon them. The silence was broken by the old gentleman, on whose countenance the others' looks were now involuntarily fixed.

" My dear children, as I may now call you," he said, " Providence has at length, in an unexpected way, relieved all our hearts of a heavy burden, and shown us clearly what his will is. I know well your thoughts now, for I have long witnessed your ill-smothered feelings. You have had, indeed, a weary and a sad probation; but Heaven, at last, puts a happy end to it, I trust,—for it calls you, at last, to be man and wife. Stand up, my sweet Rebecca; come forward, Mr. Bannatyne, while I join your hands; and may Heaven above make you abundantly happy; for the dark clouds of sorrow and dread have now been dispelled, and the sun of joy will yet arise, to prevent the extinction of my ancient house."

Mr. Bannatyne and Rebecca stood for some moments, their hands joined together, but unable to speak. A tumult of joy at the idea of

yet being a happy wife to her beloved Lewis so burst upon her, that she seemed completely overpowered; till, looking in the faces, first of her uncle, and then of the minister, she gave a short sob, and was relieved by a gush of tears.

When Rebecca had been assisted to her seat, and the others present had shed their irrepressible tears in silence beside her, they found that something more was wanted to give relief to their feelings, and that relief they found in a quarter, to which the pious and virtuous usually have resort.

Mr. Bannatyne, giving the tone to what each one of them felt, stretched forth his arms towards heaven, when the company had stood up around him, and, in an address of grateful thanksgiving to the Deity, poured forth those aspirations, in the name of all present, which the world can neither give nor take away.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT a change now took place in the hitherto dignified and dull seclusion of the venerable mansion of Lawford ! The excitement of anticipated novelty of circumstances, and the cheerful bustle and business of preparation, is always a pleasing relief from the dull *ennui* of plenty and lack of care; but it is only once in one's life that any can properly experience the unequalled delight of preparation for their own wedding.

The change in Rebecca's circumstances and prospects was almost beyond her own sober belief, and at times was almost too much for the tranquillity of her spirit. But occupation, cheerful and interesting occupation, that panacea for so much of the evil of life, and antidote to the eating poison of great mental activity, prevented the excess of her happiness from injuring the tone of her sensitive mind. Who shall describe all that is to do in a decaying man-

sion, which seemed to have been doomed to pass into new hands, by the melancholy event of the extinction of the family — its owners for centuries; but which, as its reinstated occupants, is suddenly restored to the joyful prospects of the continuation of an ancient line, to be its lords in many future years? — or who shall adequately speak of all the bright and happy feelings which connect themselves with such events, in minds like those of the gentle Priors of Lawford.

Artists of the cabinet, and artists *du drap* now occupied the busy Rebecca from morning to night, for some weeks prior to her marriage day. Her uncle was not less engaged with architects and decorations; for the old mansion was of course not only to undergo a thorough repair, but to be made to assume a splendour against the time that the happy pair should return from their marriage jaunt, such as was fitting to enhance joys and prospects so pleasing, and of late so unexpected, and to celebrate an event which formed a new era in the family history. The good old gentleman seemed now

to be entirely a new man, as Lawford House seemed like a new place from bustle and expenditure, and the very servants flew up and down stairs like fools in their stir and their joy, and made twenty errands into the talking village of Hillington, or to the houses of the numerous small lairds in the neighbourhood, to indulge country gossip, and reciprocate delight in the great event of the approaching marriage.

That marriage in due time did take place, with more general excitement and rejoicing than had been known in the neighbourhood for many years. The whole people of the village of Hillington seemed determined to take a part in it, and in some way did so when the day arrived; for the Priors of Lawford had been from time immemorial so highly respected, and their young minister was by his parishioners so deeply beloved, that himself and his interesting bride, who had so long been observed wandering sadly together, under the strange restraint of their own principles, were regarded with an almost worshipping admiration. The bald marriage ceremonial of the Scottish church was

performed in Lawford House by the nearest neighbouring clergyman, and was gone through by the trembling Rebecca with a comparative tranquillity of mind and a leaning of her feelings upon the affectionate attentions of her husband, which delighted her anxious uncle, and greatly assured all present as to the real stability of her powerful yet sensitive mental constitution.

As the carriage in which Rebecca and Mr. Bannatyne, now man and wife at last, which soon drove off with them on their marriage jaunt, passed through the main street of the village of Hillington, the shouts of the waiting people were only subdued by their profound respect; and long after the happy couple had left the town behind them, the noise of the firing of fowling-pieces, which was then the practice at popular weddings in the country, continued at intervals to remind them, by irregular echoes among the hills around, of the affection of the people, who had long watched and talked of their abiding regard. The pair proceeded first to Edinburgh, and thence to

visit the more picturesque districts of Scotland; an indulgence which Mr. Bannatyne's fortune, as well as his arrangements in his parish, enabled him to take along with his bride; and, in the mean time, Lawford House was left entirely to the tradesmen employed upon it. Soon after the departure of the bridegroom and bride, Mr. Prior and Dr. Heywood took a sober and comfortable tour by themselves, to visit several old places, and see sundry old friends, who might enhance their cheerfulness, by reminding them of the pleasures of former times, and interest them by talking of the changes of years, and of the sweets and bitters of the days that were past.

It is usual to end a tale with a marriage or a death, because men are fond of representing life as a drama, of which all the events tend to one point of happy termination, or to one decisive and woeful catastrophe. But this dramatic form of the events of destiny is seldom found to correspond with actual experience; and life itself, if fairly represented, may in many cases happen to furnish passages of genuine interest

to those who are tired of the obvious common-places which can scarcely at this day be avoided in the artificial arrangement of hackneyed incident. Be this as it may, my tale is not ended, because I have brought it to the time when those whom I knew and loved were made man and wife; nor have I found, from actual observation, that all sorrow and solicitude, all hope and fear, are entirely at an end with the most interesting couple on earth, when they come before the minister, and he has lifted up his hands over them in the presence of many witnesses, and declared them to be from that moment "married persons."

CHAPTER XII.

MONTHS and months had passed away after this, and the harvest had been got in which followed Rebecca's marriage, and stern winter had come and gone, with its long nights of comfort by the parlour fire, and its blustering blasts heard sweeping over the woods of Lawford without, and rattling and thudding against the windows of the mansion. A new spring had also arisen to "cleid the birken shaw," and even the soft showers of "summer again" fell warm yet refreshing over the green valleys of Scotland, before I took my tramps once more abroad from the solitude of Balgownie Brae, to see what friends the grave had spared me over the face of this changeable world, and what tears might have wetted the cheeks of those whom, in sundry places, I remembered with concern; for I was acquainted with many a thoughtful soul, to whom laughter itself was not always a pleasure, nor the natural alternations

of softening sadness always a pain. Up hill and down dale, therefore, I wandered once more, and saw many a kind body, and heard many a comforting tale; but there were few of all those who at this time interested my thoughts, that I was more anxious to hear of, or more blithe to see, than the amiable family of the Priors of Lawford.

But surely, thought I to myself, as I plodded on, I must be getting to be an old man; for I feel the roads becoming long, and my breath becoming short; the wading of brooks does not agree with the stiffness of eild, and the day is always far spent now, before I can win to the end of my journey. The time was, when I could keep up, foot for foot, with the cleverest lass that ever tramped to market with her basket of eggs; and when the prettiest who was ever wont to look in my face as we padded over the dewy ground, saw nothing in it then to prevent her making me her confidant of all the love that had ever at any time kept her from her sleep. But, alas! I say to myself, surely the days of man are as the grass, and as the

flower of the field he withereth ; “ for the wind passeth over it,” saith the Psalmist, “ and it is gone, and the place that now knows it soon knows it no more.”

It was on a dull, dropping, drizzling evening, at the latter end of August, when I found myself at length drawing near to the sweet village of Hillington. I had that day travelled towards it by a different road from that to which I was accustomed ; and whether I had wandered out of the straight way, I know not, but it seemed to me unusually long, as well as lonely and dreigh. The mist that had crowned all day the lumpish hills on my right was not disposed in shadowy and floating wreaths of grey white, screening poetically, as I have seen it, the rich purple colour which the hills wore at this season ; but lay in dead clouds of sad obscurity all round, limiting the dreary prospect to the watery fields on the lower grounds, and the dull sky in which the sun seemed ashamed to show his face.

The quaint old steeple of Hillington Church, which now shot upwards between me and the

fading light, began to relieve me; but somehow, it and the gothic windows of the building beneath it, reminded me also of age and mortality, into which my thoughts had now taken an unusual turn; and I entered the empty long street of the town with a sadness over my spirit as if Providence were preparing me, as it often has done, by an inward impression, for the sudden surprisal of some evil tidings. I almost mistook the door of my own inn, although I had known it so long and so well; for no one stood at the entrance to welcome me, as had always been the case aforetime, and I saw no other but strange faces in the passage. Although, in going in, I made nought to do, but entered my accustomed room as usual, I soon saw that some change had taken place within the premises. The respectable square-looking high-backed arm-chair, which had hitherto been my favourite resting-place in the little parlour, and which I sometimes thought seemed almost to know me, and to stretch out its bowed arms on my arrival with a look of welcome, was now nowhere to be seen, and its place was supplied by a new-

fangled figmaleery affair of red mahogany, the very shape of which was a grievance to me to look at.

I deposited my little wallet on another new acquaintance among the furniture, and gladly disposed of myself into a resting position ; but I had rung the bell three several times before any one appeared to do the services of the hostelry as I should command, and then, instead of the sweet little fairy of a girl that used to bring me my comforts, and light me to my bed at night, there was a red-elbowed, shock-headed kimmer came blattering in at the door, without the least respect, and impudently asked me what it was I wanted.

The first words I was able to address to this ill-boding apparition were by no means worded with my usual circumspection, and consisted of short-spoken enquiries into the meaning of this topsy-turvy state of the head inn of Hillington, and why it was that my old acquaintance the landlady had not on this occasion chosen to wait on me as formerly. It was little to be expected that I should get much satisfaction

of the brazen cutty who now stood before me; but I was able to draw from her one piece of news which shocked me not a little in the mood I then was; to wit, that my blithe and kind landlady had been some time dead, and that the inn and its furnishings had, of course, passed into quite new hands.

The reflections that this simple event called up, entirely took away my appetite for the ill-regulated supper that was now set before me; for I felt, in spite of my worldly reasonings, that I had lost a friend who used to cheer me in one of my most interesting rounds; and I remembered with apprehension of further disastrous intelligence, the vile forebodings that had haunted my spirit all day, as I wandered alone by the wayside, and thought with sorrow of the progressive narrowing of the circle of my ancient acquaintances. I further learned, that my old friend, the laird of Glauderston, was also no more; having been cut off shortly after my last departure from the neighbourhood by an hereditary inflammation; and that his son-in-law, the laird of Bicknel Hill, was now reigning

in his stead over the numerous ugly figures which he had contrived to transplant, and to set up all round among the clipped bushes of Glaunderston plantations.

But, of my interesting friends the Priors of Lawford, I was at length enabled to learn many particulars which had occurred among them since Rebecca's marriage; and the relation of which had various effects upon my own feelings. I stayed, with but little personal comfort, for a few days in the inn at Hillington, to gather together my own thoughts, as well as the different details I was able to pick up. I did not think them altogether satisfactory, but, such as they were, they enabled me in my own way to proceed with my story.

The happiness that fell to the lot of Rebecca Prior and her husband, for a considerable time after their marriage, can only be judged of by those who have themselves tasted what tranquil bliss *may be* enjoyed in the state of well-assorted wedlock; and who can enter into the appreciation of that intense sense of felicity, which is experienced by minds and hearts such as were

those I speak of, now as they were in circumstances so much to their wishes, and with the enhancing recollection of so much previous suffering. If in the world the happiness of mortals were permitted to be long without alloy, assuredly theirs would have been so from their marriage day forth. But though troubles spring not out of the dust of the earth, nor does sorrow gush, says the sacred murmur, from the ground we tread on; though a man look towards the east, and all is serene brightness, and towards the west, and there appeareth no enemy; yet, above or around, or from within or without, a canker worm shall arise to eat into his joys; or the very winds of heaven shall bring to him on their wings, their commissioned portion of the world's evil.

And yet, to Rebecca, there came nothing outwardly for many a day, to break the pleasing spell of her well-enjoyed happiness. She and her fond husband, and her cheerful and revived uncle, enjoyed their dream of conscious felicity in the tranquil domesticity of their hearth at Lawford, amidst the regard and respect of all

who knew them. The only thing that could be said to trouble Rebecca's thoughts was, the occasional stealing intrusion of that apprehensive conviction, so natural to minds capable of enjoying very highly any earthly good, that her present felicity was too unmixed to be lasting; and a shadowy presentiment shot, at times, through her mind, that, though neither she nor her Lewis could at present see where it was to come from, some event was not far distant, which would at least cause a ripple upon the tranquil surface of their sea of happiness. Her long indulged dread, too, of the family malady, had taken too fast hold upon her mind to be altogether eradicated, even by the joyous events that had so lately taken place; and although such a thought was now banished as often as it intruded, her very felicity made her at times still turn to this point in the index of possible evil, with a disturbing feeling of nervous anxiety.

The keen eyes of affection enabled Mr. Banatyne at length to perceive this, and the prospect of an heir being speedily given to the

family having increased the joy of all, while it deepened the interest in every thing that concerned Rebecca, he immediately consulted Doctor Heywood, whether some additional society, in the shape of female attendants, might not be likely to banish from her mind what remained of this troublesome though vague dread. The doctor at once agreed in the propriety of the arrangement; observing, at the same time, that it had always been a peculiarity of the Lawford family, that they had kept themselves too much in a state of seclusion, chiefly from their own sensitive refinement of mind, and their too lofty conceptions of what was becoming in human nature. But as Mrs. Bannatyne was, as they knew, too fastidious to admit too much familiarity of such female society as was furnished by her own neighbourhood, if a gentlewoman could be found, possessed of an intellect that should render her worthy to be Rebecca's companion, while her circumstances placed her in the situation, in some degree, of a dependant, such a person might at all times, and particularly at

the forthcoming crisis, be a most valuable member of the family at Lawford.

On consulting Rebecca concerning what the gentlemen had concluded for her, she was quite pleased with the idea of what she called so agreeable an indulgence, particularly as the adding such an attendant to the establishment at Lawford, would likely be the means of making comfortable some deserving, and probably unfortunate, person. An application having been at once made to a friend, extensively acquainted in Edinburgh, a gentlewoman was soon introduced to Doctor Heywood, who seemed to be perfectly suited to the wishes of all concerned; and was soon after installed as a permanent inmate in the family of Mr. Banatyne. Strange as it may appear, however, the only person who entertained a shadowing doubt regarding any part of the high character which this lady had received, was the one principally concerned, namely, Rebecca herself; who, when Mrs. Chapman was introduced to her, thought, that what a first impression enabled her to judge of the stranger, being

involuntarily less favourable than description had made her anticipate, ought to be dismissed from her thoughts, as an unworthy and fanciful surmise. But the part that the new inmate at Lawford was destined to play, may excuse a little particularity in my account of her, and of her previous history.

Mrs. Chapman was a widow, now about twenty-eight years of age, a member of a family of some antiquity, though not wealthy, but who, having made an imprudent marriage in her youth, had greatly incurred the displeasure, though she had not lost the good opinion, of her friends. Her husband, as usual in such cases, had used her barbarously; but this she bore so well, and she withal discovered, while he lived, such prudent conduct, and such decision of character, that the displeasure of her relatives turned into sympathy, and they did all they could to alleviate the difficulties into which her husband's early death, as well as his general improvidence, had plunged her. What principally recommended this lady as a companion to Rebecca was, that she was a woman

of “strong sense,” as well as general intelligence, who had seen not a little of the world, and suffered, with a fair character, not a few of its trials. Her person was ladylike, and her full blue eyes had that peculiarity, that they could express in an instant the various transitions from modest humility to something like boldness.

The constant society of Mrs. Chapman, although it was occasionally felt, both by Rebecca and her husband, to be somewhat of a restraint upon them, yet was, upon the whole, an agreeable accession to their domestic enjoyment; and, ere long, she became a great favourite with every one, high and low, in the mansion. The gentlemen seemed to be particularly taken with the gaiety of her manner, and her powerful good sense in conversation; and whenever, in process of time, a suspicion crossed the mind of Rebecca, that her companion seemed to take more pains to show off the admitted goodness of her understanding, than was exactly suited to her own situation, and the respect she owed to her (Rebecca) as

the lady of the house and her protectress, she repressed carefully every unfavourable suggestion, and turned the suspicion back upon herself, from a candid dread of indulging any thing like the mean feelings of female envy towards a person in Mrs. Chapman's dependent situation. This suspicion of self, and benevolent tendency to her own crimination, rather than allow of blame upon another, had very much become a rooted habit of Rebecca's mind, and partly arose from her lofty conceptions of virtue and purity, but more from that terror of discovering any thing like perversion of intellect, or the most distant symptoms of the malady of her house, which had haunted her from the moment when she was first made acquainted with the dreadful truth.

Time went on, however, and no incident occurred materially to disturb the smooth stream of happiness which was enjoyed by all who dwelt in the mansion ; and the safe birth of a son to bless the delighted parents and family, and to heir the ancient property and name of the house of Lawford as well as Ban-

natyne, was succeeded by rejoicings such as never had been witnessed in the vicinity of Hillington. Although the recovery of Rebecca was somewhat tedious, her feelings, on finding herself at last occupied with the endearing duties of a mother, and as she often contemplated her own sweet babe, while the infant lay asleep on her knee, seemed almost too acutely delightful for the strength of her mind to bear with sobriety, weak as her accouchement had evidently left her. But the mental wanderings not unusual at periods of weakness, although Rebecca had experienced her full share of them, she did not suffer to fill her with any material alarm, until an evident peculiarity in the manner, to her, of Mrs. Chapman, when she conceived her strength almost completely recovered, aroused her to enquiries and suspicions exceedingly unfavourable to her quiet of mind.

What this peculiarity consisted of, it was not very easy either perfectly to identify or define: it was one of those things in the address and manner, to us, of others, which implies or makes us *feel* a real degradation, but which is

yet too nice in its shadings, and too much blended with kindness and apparent respect, to prevent us from suspecting it of being more or less the creation merely of our own fancies : but it was of such a nature, in Rebecca's case, that she could not, consistently with her own dignity, consent to herself to ask for any explanation concerning it ; nor was she sure that, even although she should bring herself to condescend to this, she should obtain an answer on which she ought to depend.

This feeling was the more painful to the private thoughts of Rebecca, as the thing she complained of seemed, at times, to be participated in by her dear Lewis himself ; and even his extreme tenderness and caressing kindness, during the progress of her recovery, were, in part, attributed to this new sentiment with which she fancied that she began to be regarded. That sentiment, which seemed at first to take the shape of a humiliating, yet kindly, condescension, to her weakness, as if of mind as well as body, when she was perfectly recovered, became, as she thought, of a more

decided and expressive character, filling her with alarming cares and enquiries, and again turning her attention intensely inwards. She now observed that often when she spoke at table, Mrs. Chapman would assent studiedly to what she said, as one will do to the idle babble of a child, with whom they would not condescend to argue.

Notwithstanding the respect that she had for Mrs. Chapman's understanding, this was conduct which she was determined to take an early opportunity of effectually checking; but it was not easy to do it, without either, in some degree, compromising her own dignity, or incurring the suspicion of being actuated by motives the very idea of which she held in the highest disdain. She did speak to her, however, on an occasion of peculiar provocation, and in the presence of Mr. Bannatyne and her uncle; and though this was done with that mixture of raillery and seriousness, which bespoke the considerate delicacy of a mind anxious to convey with tenderness a merited reproof, the colour that rose into the face of the widow, as she observed the

surprise that Rebecca's remark excited in Mr. Bannatyne, and the flash that instantly shot from her eyes, indicated, besides a consciousness that the reproof was a just one, sentiments which, at the moment, seemed far from amiable.

The old gentleman, after an embarrassed remark of Mr. Bannatyne, turned off with a laugh this little spurt between the ladies; and before they rose, Mrs. Chapman put on such a look and manner of humility and penitence, that Rebecca was not only completely mollified, but, in the considerate candour of her spirit, retired to rest in a mood of self-accusation, from the suspicion that she might have, after all, unmeritedly wounded the feelings of a destitute woman and a dependant. On speaking of the matter afterwards, privately, to Mrs. Chapman, and comparing the strange looks and guarded replies of that lady, with sundry tender questionings and soothing remarks of Mr. Bannatyne, the thought at once struck home to her heart, that, by something unknown to herself, in her speech or manner, she had been exhibiting, to the alarm and consternation

of those around her, some distant symptoms of the dreaded malady of her family.

When this horrid idea took possession of her mind, it is not to be expressed what she felt in private, as she brooded over the fancy with apprehensive despondency; and yet she thought, upon the most rigorous examination of her own mental experience, that, if there did actually exist the surmise that she suspected, it must be founded on a mere mistake of over-watchful anxiety concerning her; for, if her own judgment weighed any thing whatever in such an enquiry, she could find no ground for coming to any such distressing conclusion: but the insane, she knew, were always deceivers of themselves; and though she would have given worlds to know precisely what her Lewis actually thought concerning her, so sensitive was she upon this dreaded point, that she could not bring herself to disturb his mind with the most distant enquiry upon the painful subject. Unfortunately, at this time, Doctor Heywood was in London, or on the Continent, whither he had gone of late to live for a season; and in this

state of painful self-observation and uncertainty, the happiness of the married life of the unfortunate Rebecca, was now disturbed and poisoned by the internal struggle and distraction of a nervous anxiety, about what might be evinced by her manner and conversation.

And yet there was something occasionally in the manner of Mrs. Chapman, particularly in her argumentative or playful conversations in presence of Mr. Bannatyne, that, while it challenged her admiration of that lady's talents and tact, excited, unwillingly, flashes of thought across her mind of a nature exceedingly distressing to the feelings of a doting married woman. But again there seemed other things inconsistent with these obtrusive imaginings; and when Rebecca, when alone with the minister, observed his completely artless, and truly affectionate, almost adoring, conduct to herself, she was inclined not only to blame herself for suffering the intrusion of such unworthy and painful fancyings, but seriously to suspect that such thoughts were too surely symptomatic of that malady which was at once, perhaps, her

companion and her curse. And then, to confirm her in these unhappy suspicions of herself, she observed, along with the humble and deferential manner to all, of the talented widow, that, sometimes, when she (Rebecca) had uttered a sentence, Mrs. Chapman seemed to regard her with a look as if of mingled sorrow and compassion; and, turning her large eyes next upon Mr. Bannatyne's countenance, would playfully, and without noticing what Rebecca had said, proceed with the thread of her own absorbing conversation.

The reader has, by this time, probably, seen, in the conduct of Mrs. Chapman, the real meaning of all this; but which the unsuspecting benevolence of Rebecca's nature would not allow her, in any case, to conclude. To be short, if Mrs. Chapman was a person of "strong sense," she was also a woman of strong passions; and a week had not elapsed from the day of her arrival at Lawford House, before her eye was fascinated, and even her feelings absorbed, by the handsome and unsuspecting minister of Hillington. Nor was this guilty admiration

unknown to herself, as such a thing might have been, for a time, to a more simple, or, in plain terms, a more modest woman; but, though fully aware of all the danger and all the wickedness of indulging a sentiment of this sort for a married man and a minister of religion, with that recklessness of consequences which has ever been the characteristic of the most abandoned of her sex, she at once gave herself up to the influence of her vicious passion; and, without any precise design or planned purpose, found her only pleasure in fishing for the admiration and striving to seduce the affections of the youthful minister. Had Mr. Bannatyne been as practised as *she* was in the ways of the world, he soon could have read the meaning of the alluring arts of the widow: but the feeling of suspicion is the penalty only of the experimental knowledge of evil; and so the single-hearted clergyman was, as yet, perfectly blind to all that Mrs. Chapman dared to show to attract his regard.

CHAPTER XIII.

DURING all this time, Mrs. Dryburgh, who now lived much at the old-fashioned mansion of Glaunderston, near Hillington, made several attempts to impose herself anew upon the acquaintance of Rebecca, now as the latter was, as she said, a “married woman.” In these efforts she was not entirely unsuccessful, particularly after the introduction of Mrs. Chapman into Lawford House; for, as Rebecca’s good nature was fully a match for her own shrinking reserve, her crafty dependant easily managed to favour the visits, from motives of her own, of the talkative lady of Bicknel Hill.

One day, Rebecca, having been somewhat discomposed by her own reflections upon something that had occurred at the breakfast table in the morning, had thrown herself upon a couch in her apartment, and, indulging for a time the feelings that oppressed her, insensibly

fell into a dreamy sleep, while Mrs. Chapman sat by in professed attendance. She was awakened by the noise below of some one's entrance; but, hearing the voice of Mrs. Dryburgh in the hall, she feigned to be still asleep, as Mrs. Chapman passed out of the room to receive her visiter, in order to avoid the personal annoyance of the former lady's present society. Although, in doing this, she had, as she thought, given sufficient indication to Mrs. Chapman that her slumber was feigned, she was surprised to find the latter return on tip-toe, leading in Mrs. Dryburgh; and the two, seating themselves beyond a light curtain or screen, commenced conversation in her hearing, under the seeming supposition that she was asleep.

"An' hoo are ye, Mrs. Chapman?" began Lady Bicknel, as Mrs. Dryburgh was usually called by the country people, "weel, hoo are ye? Dear me, but I'm quite happy to meet you just by yoursel, Mrs. Chapman, for I've often been wishing for a quiet word o' you, about Miss Prior — bless me, I never can call her any thing else but Miss! for really I never

thought to ha'e seen her a married woman; an' I'm greatly concerned about her — but are ye sure she's fast asleep?"

"Quite sound, Mrs. Dryburgh," said the other; "besides, she lies off at a distance from us, and cannot possibly hear."

"Weel, ye see, Mrs. Chapman, I would just like, as I say, to hae twa words wi' you about Mrs. — Mrs. Bannatyne — dear me, I never can get my tongue about her married name — for I wonder hoo she is since she was married, puir dear lady, an' how she's getting on, an' hoo she's doing with the baby, an' if her head, ye see, is just quite right; for ye know, Mrs. Chapman, that marriage is a trying thing, an' ye have been a married woman yoursel, Mrs. Chapman, and I would just like to ken — but are ye sure she'll not hear us?"

"There is no fear of that, if we do not speak any louder."

"Weel, Mrs. Chapman, does your lady, do ye think, just appear aye fair an' square i' the head? — because, ye know, the Prior family was aye an odd family: an' does the puir lady never take

ony bits o' tirrivees, or ony kind o' queer symptomatics, or hysterics, or —— eh?"

"Ye know, Mrs. Dryburgh," said the widow, with a demure and wise look, "that it would not be becoming in me to let the least word pass my lips that would look like a disclosure of family affairs; and I need not tell a woman of your experience, Mrs. Dryburgh, that in every family there *are* matters that ——"

"I am perfectly aware of that, Mrs. Chapman, an' it's a most wise and sensible observe of you; because I'm a married woman myself, an', as you say, in every family there *are* little affairs — but as to this lady, there is something in her look — but I may be mistaken, Mrs. Chapman; an' noo, as we are by ourselves, I would just like to hear your breath about her, puir thing; for if she were ever losing her reason, an', as I say, she has sometimes a very strange look with her — God help her puir young family! an' the minister himself would gang clean crazy after her. But what do ye think?"

"I think, Mrs. Dryburgh, that — but it's not to seek what I would say."

"Hech sirs! but ye may tell *me*, Mrs Chapman, for I jaloused as much. An', really, ye maun hae a kittle place o' 't amang them a'; for it's so hard to know what to do wi' a daft body: ye'll excuse my plain talk — odd, I hope she doesna hear us!"

"No fear of that, madam."

"An' she'll whiles talk quite odd, an' as it were silly?"

"She does talk very strangely sometimes."

"Hech! hech! its just beginning on her."

"One would really at times almost think so."

"And imagines every thing she says, quite gude sense and perfect gospel?"

"You know that is the nature of that unfortunate state of mind."

"Perfectly the nature o' 't; and ye'll no dare to contradict or argue wi' her, whatever she may say."

"It would be of no avail; besides, it would be somewhat cruel to the dear young lady,— an' so I just give a look to the minister or so, and say nothing."

"O but ye're a sensible, wise woman, Mrs. Chapman! what a treasure you must be to that puir demented leddy!"

"Hush — sh! But you must not suppose, Mrs. Dryburgh, that I have mentioned to you any thing particular; Mrs. Bannatyne is a sweet young creature, an' the minister is such a dear kind — —"

"Oh, is n't he a fine-looking gentleman, the minister! he's a full head an' shoulders above Mr. Dryburgh, my stumpy gudeman — but, talking of men, Mrs. Chapman, Mr. Bannatyne should never have been a minister wi' a black coat, he should have been a grand dragoon offisher, wi' a red coat an' a swurd, — that's aye what I say."

"He would have looked just to my mind in the cavalry dress, certainly," said the widow delighted with the thought: "but hush—speak low; it is likely Mrs. Bannatyne will shortly waken, and it would be as well, Mrs. Dryburgh, that you were not found here alone with me."

"Ye say right, Mrs. Chapman," added Lady Bicknel, rising; "an', dear me now, what ye tell me about your lady, is just what I was afraid of, whenever Miss Prior became a married woman."

"Remember, I have not told you any thing particular, Mrs. Dryburgh," continued the widow, looking wise; "for family affairs are what I shall never speak of."

"You are a discreet woman, Mrs. Chapman, I see that; but just trust to me, for I ha'e more sense, after all, than ye may be would expect, when ye come to find me out."

"It is evident you have a deal of sense, ma'am," said the widow, slyly, "and it's a great blessing, Mrs. Dryburgh," she went on, in a louder tone, "to be possessed of one's senses; for if the mind is any way astray, and the reason out of joint, what a chaos does it not make in the whole system of our mental comprehension!"

"What a beautiful style of language you have in your speech, Mrs. Chapman!" exclaimed Lady Bicknel, with a flattering sweet-

ness of manner, which was exceedingly enchanting to the knowing widow, only she could with much difficulty preserve herself from a burst of laughter.

“ Before I was married, *my* style of language was alloood to be uncommonly elegant, for my father had me at Mrs. Deyelle’s boarding-school, which, ye know, was the very first rate ; but, when a woman gets *married*, Mrs. Chapman, an’ especially in a country place, why, ye see, we forget our lair, an’ our parley-vous, an’ every thing. But farewell, mem, an’ just give my kind regards to Mrs. Bannatyne, an’ say, that I could not think of disturbing her, when I heard she was taking her *bon repos*. Ah, Mrs. Chapman, what a pity it is to see sae pretty a young creature as that — hush — getting quite out o’ her mind. But that was the state o’ her puir father before her, wha died demented, an’ that is the curse o’ the whole Priors of Lawford, as I’ve heard my father that’s dead an’ gone often say. What a blessing it is to be in possession of one’s sound senses ! You and I ought to be thankful for

our wits when we look at that unfortunate leddy;
an' then there's the baby too. I 'm feared to
think what it's likely to come to yet. Oddsake,
mem, do ye think that she could be hearing us
all this time?"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE truth contained in the fable of the Boys and the Frogs, that what is but sport to some is death to others, is oftener applicable than those, at least, who are in the habit of looking only for sport, are, in their thoughtlessness, ready to admit: and so it was in the case of Rebecca and Mrs. Chapman, as detailed in the preceding brief chapter. To the unfeeling widow, however, it was more than sport, as has been already hinted, to work as she was doing upon the sensitive mind of the young wife; and her success was equal to the depth of her craft and the singleness of heart of her unsuspecting victim.

Rebecca, compelled as she had involuntarily been, to be an eves-dropper to that which was destructive to her own peace, had only heard distinctly a part of the conversation between the two women; but the widow, having taken

this method of making her indirectly acquainted with what she desired might be believed to be her sentiments, took care to give sufficient voice to that part of the talk which she wished her lady to hear; and the way in which it was spoken, and the whispering indistinctness of the remainder, conveyed an impression to the unsuspecting Rebecca, even more deep and decided than the crafty Abigail could have anticipated. Along with that impression, the few words of caution and seeming reluctance to allow her own sentiments to escape, uttered by Mrs. Chapman, in the early part of the conversation, conveyed to the amiable mind of her lady the notion, that the widow was more her friend than, from some other indications, she had been ready to suppose; and, making allowance for the natural talkativeness of her sex, that she was a very prudent and considerate person. Whenever a suspicion contrary to this crossed her thoughts, she only treated it as a further proof of that obliquity of mind which belongs to insanity, and into which she now feared, or rather concluded, in her dread, that she was fast merging.

From this hour there was a decided change in the conduct of the unhappy Rebecca, while her doting husband (her uncle having in the mean time gone to spend a few months in Edinburgh) was obliged to notice in her what filled him with such alarm and distress of mind, as, in delicacy towards the old gentleman's peace, he was actually afraid to make the subject of any communication to him for the present. Yet what he could remark in the changed lady of the mansion was not of that nature to enable him to come to a very decided conclusion. Her obstinate yet unwilling taciturnity, which, in fact, arose from her nervous dread of saying any thing which should confirm her own and his suspicion of any aberration of mind, though, at first, set down by Mr. Bannatyne to that cause, became, at length, by the insinuated representations of Mrs. Chapman, to be considered as a proof of something even more intolerable to him than the mental affliction; namely, alienation of heart from himself. What else could it be, he thought, that made her now appear studiously to avoid him; and,

dwelling only over the constant contemplation of their infant, instead of being much with him as formerly in their days of happiness, to answer him with suspicious hesitation when he met and addressed her, and even palpably to shun his society ?

On her part the change was even more deeply distressing, forasmuch as it centred chiefly in distrust of herself. And yet, with the most rigorous examination of her own thoughts, all the self-humiliation that candour had reared upon extreme modesty could not lead her fully to conclude that a real aberration had actually manifested itself in her mind. But by this time the widow had contrived to turn her suspicions partly into another channel ; and the fortune and connections of the minister, leading him, of late, into occupations of a public nature, which took him occasionally from home, the wily woman, with her usual art, contrived, by degrees, to insinuate into the mind of the secluded Rebecca, that Mr. Bannatyne was no longer the man he used to be ; and to render her even more guarded than ever, in her be-

haviour, when in his presence, by the broadly asserted suspicion, that, in consequence of the mental imbecility that she had lately shown, his mind was beginning to be quite estranged from her.

And yet, sometimes, she thought, he looked kindly, and, as she imagined, with compassion, upon her, and addressed her inquisitively, yet with an expression of anxious affection ; but this very manner, again, threw her mind back upon her suspected aberration, and she dreaded to reply to him, lest she should further betray something of the malady of her family. But malady, the actual malady, seemed now undeniably to be coming over her, as she would sit wistfully contemplating her slumbering baby in her chamber, the fruit of the love between her and her Lewis, in days when as yet her mind was sound and his affections were to her all in all. And then, when her chosen solitude grew irksome to her, she would steal up to that shut-up chamber, where the portraits of her ancestors, who had died in that dreadful state, glared melancholy around upon her from

their dusty frames, and seemed to look piteously down to another hapless daughter of a hapless house, who, with fatal infatuation, had made herself another link to continue the chain of their misery to future generations.

“ Is Mrs. Bannatyne not coming to-day also, to meet us at dinner, Mrs. Chapman ? ” said the minister, one evening, as he sat down with the widow to their solitary meal. “ Truly, this is very sad and uncomfortable.”

“ She bade me excuse her again, sir,” said the widow, mysteriously ; “ besides, she complains of being ill.”

“ What am I to think of this ? And is Mrs. Bannatyne really so ill ? I will go and speak to her.”

“ Indeed, sir, excuse me,” said the widow, “ but it were better not.”

“ Why, Mrs. Chapman ? did she say she would not see me ? ”

“ Something to that purport, sir. But not by any means these words. Excuse me, sir ; but I have already said all I could to Mrs. Bannatyne.”

" But she seemed obstinate."

" I do not say, obstinate, sir. Mrs. Bannatyne seems to be ill."

" How unfortunate it is that Doctor Heywood is not here ! alas, what a case am I in ! "

" Shall I go and speak to your lady again, Mr. Bannatyne ? I would do any thing to see you happy, sir."

" I know you would, Mrs. Chapman. My obligations to you are infinite. I cannot express my sense of your attention to my poor Rebecca. But you need not go to her again. It might irritate her mind. Heaven will enable me to bear this trial ; and time and patience may yet bring her to herself and me. Excuse me, Mrs. Chapman, but I cannot partake of these viands :" and, seizing his hat, the distressed Lewis rushed forth, to seek calm to his mind in the woods of Lawford.

He saw Rebecca at night, but only for a few moments, although the crafty widow was constantly in his way. In two days after, he was preparing to depart for Edinburgh, to attend

the meeting of his presbytery, his fortune enabling him by this time to have an assistant in his clerical duties; and his communications with Rebecca being now chiefly through Mrs. Chapman, he sent for that lady to enquire if it would be agreeable for Mrs. Bannatyne to see him, that he might take his leave.

“Your lady will see you, sir,” said the widow, with seeming joy, after making the enquiry; “but it might be advisable to say but little to her at present, and, above all, not to ask her any particular questions.”

“I will attend to your suggestion, Mrs. Chapman,” said the minister: “but how will you entertain my poor Rebecca during all the time of my absence?”

“Ah, sir, she will not be entertained, that is the misfortune. But I will do all in my power, and there is Mrs. Dryburgh visits her occasionally.”

“Mrs. Dryburgh! and is my Rebecca reduced so low as to take pleasure in the company of Mrs. Dryburgh! Alas! But as for you, madam, I cannot express what I owe to you

for this self-denied attention to my poor wife — I trust her entirely to you."

When he entered her chamber to take leave as permitted, he found Rebecca bent over their infant, and her eyes gleamed with joy as she rose to meet him. But she pressed his hands in silence, and looking up in his face, seemed ready to burst into tears.

"How are you, Rebecca? How are your feelings to-day? I am sorry to see you look so pale."

"Are you really sorry for me, Lewis?"

"Truly I am, but —" here a look from the widow admonished him to say little.

"I am going to part with you for some time," he went on; "but I leave you with good attendance in this worthy lady."

"Going to leave me, Lewis — and never told me till this moment?"

"I told Mrs. Bannatyne, sir, but she forgets," said the widow, with a nod to the minister.

"You told me? How can you say so, Mrs. Chapman?" said Rebecca; a slight flush of indignation passing over her pale countenance

—“would I forget such news as my husband’s going to leave me ?”

“ My dear lady, I did tell you several times,” said Mrs. Chapman, compassionately, “ but your mind is —— ” and she ended with a look towards the minister.

“ Is it indeed so, Lewis ?” said the unfortunate lady, with moving pathos, as she perused with alarm the countenance of her husband.

“ Be tranquil and be happy, until my return, Rebecca; and this excellent lady will, I trust, be a constant comfort to you. Farewell !”

“ That is not the way he used to bid me farewell in my happy days,” said Rebecca, within herself, as she withdrew her hand silently from his, — “ but these days are gone.”

He stepped forward to caress their infant — for a moment looked sadly in her face as he passed, offering her his hand again, which she was too much absorbed to take: he then left her in melancholy silence, and went on his journey.

“ With what sad thoughts do I leave my home now, which was once so happy !” he mur-

mured to himself as he rode, musing on his solitary way, leaving behind him his beloved village of Hillington. “ I wish I had said something more to my poor Rebecca, she looked in my face so sadly, as if something oppressed her. Can it be possible that I am deceived? I feel a strange dissatisfaction with myself, I can scarcely tell why. But yet I might have spoken more to her — I thought she looked disappointed ; and my own heart yearned to caress her as I used — but that unhappy malady ! What if *I* have been to blame in increasing her sorrow ! I could almost go back this instant, to enquire further concerning her, and judge for myself. But in two weeks I must return to Hillington, and surely by that time her state of mind will be more decided.”

With such reflections as these, Mr. Bannatyne pursued his solitary journey to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XV.

IT was a melancholy time to Rebecca, that, while Lewis was from home, and she was left entirely to the brooding abstraction of her own thoughts, and to the constant society of the crafty Mrs. Chapman. "Oh if I could but see my uncle," she would sometimes say to herself; "and now another month must surely bring him to Lawford. But yet I am almost afraid to see him, if this horrid despondency be indeed that unhappy affliction which has been the misery of our house—I have not courage to write to him, to hasten his return."

"Yet surely," she would think within herself, as she sometimes took an airing abroad in the carriage, "this sadness cannot, after all, be decided insanity, for the breeze of heaven seems as delightful to me as ever, and the fragrance of the hills comes refreshing to my senses; the woods of Lawford look still lovely and green, and the birds on the branches pipe sweetly as



I pass. There is not a flower that “adorns the green valleys,” but I know and delight in as the silent friend of my youth; and the broom that grows yellow on the braes of Greenwood speaks a language as solacing to my poetic apprehension, as does the pretty spire and solemn burying-ground of the old church of Hillington, to the heavenward aspirations of my wounded spirit.

“ But I will not be positive in that difficult judgment which is founded merely on my own consciousness ; and if the affections of my husband have not yet deserted me, the malady of my family may never come upon me in that full and frightful measure, that shall destroy that reason which preserves my responsibility to Heaven that is above me—the great and merciful Heaven,— which does not disdain to watch over the wanderings even of a heart like mine.”

But heavy clouds and shadows of despondency would again come over her reflective spirit, as she sat solitary in her chamber ; and thoughts would arise in her weary abstractions, which almost convinced her that it was indeed no misrepresentation, that she was really astray

in her mind. And then, as she watched the nursing of her beloved infant, and her heart was lightened by his interesting playfulness, she would look through the obscure vista of future time, to the days when the babe might be a man, and the proprietor of Lawford—till the portraits of her ancestors in the deserted chamber seemed, in her thoughts, to prophesy of the child's after-destiny; and the dreadful imagination of his yet being a raving maniac before he left the world, to carry forward to another generation the fatality of her house, would close with anticipated horrors the fancies that oppressed her.

Nearly three weeks had passed away since Mr. Bannatyne left Lawford, and the sacrament Sunday at Hillington church was now at hand, and still the minister had not yet come home. It was a long and sad period to Rebecca; but at length, as the sacrament week advanced, the minister did arrive, in company with another clergyman, one of his intended assistants in the ensuing solemnity.

“Where is Mrs. Chapman? how is my

Rebecca?" were the first questions he asked on stepping once more into the hall at Lawford.

"Mrs. Bannatyne, I am sorry to say, is in a very peculiar state," said the widow, who was already in the way.

"Let me see her; I wish to speak to her," said the minister, eagerly.

"Pardon me, sir, but it might not be wise all at once to break in upon your poor lady, in the state she is."

"What state is she in, Mrs. Chapman? Inform me quickly, for this is worse than I had imagined."

"I am no physician, sir, and I cannot describe her state in a way that, perhaps, you could well understand. But, sir, she is very silent and low. I have, however, got Mrs. Dryburgh to visit her sometimes, and that lady is with her now."

"And may I not see her, as well as Mrs. Dryburgh?"

"Certainly, sir, if it is your wish—but—"

"What would you say, Mrs. Chapman?"

“ You know, sir, that it is a peculiarity of those who have unhappily fallen into that state, that they have a distaste at those whom they formerly loved the most, and that the very sight of them irritates their disorder.”

“ Gracious Heavens ! and has it come to that with my poor Rebecca ?”

“ I do not absolutely say so, sir ; but from some expressions she has used — ”

“ I understand you,- Mrs. Chapman, and perceive the considerate delicacy by which you are actuated. Alas ! and this is, at length, the state of my adored wife ! ”

“ But I will hint to her cautiously, that you are come home, sir,” continued the widow, happy at the success of her diabolical insinuations, “ and see if it would be at all safe for you to see her ; and surely she will consent to meet you. Then, if you take no notice of what she may say, you may see the dear lady for a few minutes with little danger.”

“ God bless you, Mrs. Chapman, do what you can to enable me to see her without aggravating the state of her mind. And in the

mean time, pray say to Mrs. Dryburgh, that I should be glad if she would step this way."

"I feel for you much in this affliction, sir," said Mr. Bryce, the clergyman, whom he had brought with him, when the widow had withdrawn. "But as, in this world, we require oftener to be reminded than instructed, allow me the liberty of reminding you of the necessity now for exercising the much talked of virtues of fortitude and resignation."

"I thank you for your counsel, sir," said Lewis, sadly; "but do you think I am right in giving way to the judgment of this woman, in abstaining from seeing my poor wife in her affliction?"

"The lady speaks sensibly, and with much apparent reason," said the stranger clergyman; "and, certainly, I have heard of cases wherein the patients could not bear the sight of those who once were the most dear to them: but I would have you to make enquiry of the other lady who visits Mrs. Bannatyne, and if she confirms the opinion of this Mrs. Chapman, no private feelings which you must naturally have,

ought to be gratified at the risk of aggravating the disorder of your unhappy wife."

Lewis agreed, with a sigh, to the opinion of his friend; and, as they were talking, Mrs. Dryburgh entered the apartment.

"I am obliged by your attention to my unfortunate lady, madam," said Lewis, as she came forward; "and, pardon me, Mrs. Dryburgh, but as you have had opportunity of seeing her often in my absence, may I ask you if you think that she is so ill, that my seeing her now might be injurious to her tranquillity?"

"I am much afeard o' t', sir; and, indeed, it would be a black danger and detriment the way the puir lady is in," said Lady Bicknel, having received her cue from the widow: "and, mair than that, sir, as I was saying to that worthy woman, Mrs. Chapman, if ye would take my advice, ye would take away that bonnie bairn of yours frae her, or at least watch her very carefully anent it."

"What mean you, Mrs. Dryburgh?"

"If ye had heard, sir, what strange talk she was talking to the infant, one day when she

thought I was not hearing her ; and she looked at the dear bairn wi' such eyes ! Lord preserve us, sir, but I could na but think o' that dreadfu' story o' Lady Belldowie, that ye may hae heard of."

" What story do you allude to, madam ? this is strange talk."

" Did you never hear of Lady Belldowie, sir, that lived at the Point o' Garnoch, by the sea-side, in the next shire. The puir woman, sir, went clean out o' her senses ; for, ye see, it was in the family, and she actually murdered her ain bairn ! "

" Mrs. Dryburgh," said Lewis, with a look of more than horror, " I hope you did not tell this story to my unhappy wife."

" Ne'er a bit, sir ; but she *did* hear it, and that when I could na hae thought she was minding me telling it to Mrs. Chapman ; an' if ye had just seen, sir, how she scream'd, as it were, into hersel', an' wrung her hands thegither fearfully ! "

Mr. Bannatyne rose, and paced the room, in dreadful agitation.

"But have you heard Mrs. Bannatyne talk in such a manner of me, madam — you will excuse me," said Lewis, stopping, and fixing his eyes on Mrs. Dryburgh — "as to induce you to suppose, as Mrs. Chapman does, that I ought not to see her for the present?"

"I have never heard the puir lady talk much at all; an', indeed, she 'll hardly speak to me: but I see plainly that the least iota would put her clean into the hysterics, an' I would advise you, sir, not to go near her until Mrs. Chapman, who understands her far better than I, give you permission."

"I think that advice is safest, sir, under all the circumstances," said the stranger clergyman, "however painful it may be to your own feelings."

By such reasoning was Mr. Bannatyne—after despatching letters to her uncle and Dr. Heywood, requesting, if possible, their instant return to Hillington—restrained from visiting his unhappy Rebecca, until the following Sunday morning; when, just as he was preparing to go to his church, to attend to the solemn minis-

trations of the sacrament, he found his mind so depressed, and uneasy with himself, that he intimated his determination to risk a short interview with her, having learned that she was already up, and engaged in her devotions, and he requested Mrs. Chapman to prepare her for his coming.

The widow, somewhat alarmed by the minister's determined manner, did prepare Rebecca, agreeably to what she had so carefully insinuated since his return; and soon Lewis, accompanied by Mr. Bryce, his friend, found himself once more in the presence of his spouse.

Rebecca did not rise as he entered, although she gave a slight start upon first setting her large liquid eyes again upon him, as if the sight was almost too much for her now; but immediately observing that he was accompanied by a stranger, she turned her face towards the book that was before her, and appeared to take no notice of his presence.

“Rebecca! — Rebecca, my love!” — he said, drawing near, “will you not speak to me,

when, in my anxiety for you, I have at last come to pay you a visit?"

"I cannot recognise a visit of ceremony from you, Lewis, as my husband," she said; "and this, I perceive, is perfectly such; as, besides the formality of announcement, you have, I observe, come to me with a suite behind you."

This speech was so sensible, both as to its matter and the tone in which it was spoken, and the reproach in it was so reasonable, upon a supposition of her sanity, that Mr. Bannatyne was perfectly thunderstruck. But, fearing to give a direct reply, until he saw further into her state of mind, he only said, —

"I wish you were sensible how much it is the contrary of what you say, Rebecca. But you are attired for going abroad. Are you really well enough to venture forth this morning?"

"I would be ill indeed," she replied, "if that prevented me from attending the Hillington sacrament. It is good for those who are broken in spirit to go up betimes to the Lord's house,

for he spreads a table in the wilderness, even for those who are left without comforter; and the deeply depressed under the world's sorrows he strengthens, and raises up from the depths of despair, and fills their mouths with songs of deliverance."

"Rebecca," said Lewis, more and more astonished, "I did not expect to find you in this placid spirit. There is always hope for those who turn to Heaven in their sorrows, for the consolations of religion are neither few nor small."

"And *it is* consolation I am in need of, Lewis," she said, hardly able to articulate; "since I have lost your affection."

"I cannot bear to hear you speak thus, Rebecca. I am under some delusion. For Heaven's sake do not give way to this emotion."

"You have been four days at home without coming to speak to me, Lewis. I am an outcast and a spectacle in my own house!—but go away to the table of the Lord. Dispense with your own hands the sacred symbols of affliction and

humiliation. It well becomes you, after the sorrow you have brought to my heart."

" You must not allow yourself to be thus agitated, sir," cried Mr. Bryce, as the distressed young clergyman smote his forehead, and looked wildly, first at Mrs. Chapman and then at Rebecca. " Remember the duties that you have this day to perform, and there is the Sabbath bell already sounding from Hillington kirk. Postpone, I beseech you, this trying matter, at least, until the services of the day are ended." And saying this, Mr. Bryce, along with the now rallied Mrs. Chapman, succeeded in withdrawing Mr. Bannatyne from his wife's apartment.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT was with a sad and perplexed spirit, on the same quiet Sabbath morning, that the Reverend Mr. Bannatyne proceeded to Hillington kirk, and mounted his pulpit to commence the public worship of the day. The reasoning of Mr. Bryce, on their way to the village, benevolently intended to calm his mind regarding his conduct to Rebecca, by urging, in extenuation, the deceptive nature of the malady with which she was suspected to be afflicted, and the probably ignorant zeal of Mrs. Chapman, by whom he had suffered himself to be persuaded, had but little effect against the cutting conviction of having caused suffering to her whom he loved above all objects on the earth, which now stung him with a thousand almost intolerable regrets.

Never before had the beloved minister of Hillington begun the solemn duties of a sacramental occasion with such an uncomfortable

and disturbed mind. There may have been some cause, he thought, for the representations of Mrs. Chapman ; but, at least, Rebecca had had reason enough left to feel bitterly the systematic cruelty with which he appeared to have treated her ; and, if she were now returning to perfect mental health, he was conscious of having caused her, perhaps, irreparable misery, at a time when he ought to have been her comfort and her stay. 'T is true, his regret was in some sort needless, as applying to what could not now be recalled ; but when, in the course of his preaching, he unavoidably cast his eyes to where she now sat, as formerly, looking up in his face, and drinking in the word of Divine consolation from his lips, as she had ever done, his heart yearned towards her, as the best beloved of his soul ; and he could have gladly undertaken any personal suffering, if that could make up for one pang that he had unwittingly caused her to feel.

What Mrs. Chapman had, by degrees, insinuated into Rebecca's mind, to string it up to the pitch at which it was on this Sabbath morning, it were tedious now at any length to parti-

cularise. But, with all the understood weakness and softness of her sex, the very intensity of her feelings upon a subject so precious to her, and so interwoven into her heart, as her husband's affections, gave her mind a strength, or, at least, a tension, upon that particular point, of which her Lewis could have had no idea. She heard, therefore, his discourse this day with all the piety which the subject matter of it was calculated to promote; but, instead of yet reading his compunction in his countenance, every thought that he uttered, that she was constrained to admire, only sent, with the approbation of it, an additional pang to the core of her heart, from the feeling that she had alienated and lost the regard of so admirable a man, and so deeply beloved a husband.

When the sermon was ended, she felt an exhaustion coming over her, and pressed forward, on the opening of the tables, to take the sacrament on its first dispensation, in order the more speedily to retire to her home. By this time her mind was in a strangely excited state, and while the people sung the preliminary psalm,

she was pressed forward among a few others, who were filling up the upper end of the tables, just at the time when Lewis was descending from his pulpit to preside at the first, after the manner of the Scottish church; and, from the politeness of those around, or some chance cause, she was placed at the head almost beside her husband, and next to Mr. Bryce, who was, after the pastor, to officiate at the tables.

When Mr. Bannatyne took his seat at the upper end of the tables, and found his Rebecca, whom he had been considering as a lunatic, and with whom he had had so unsatisfactory a scene in the morning, seated so near him at this ordinance, his feelings were such as it would not be easy by any words to convey a just idea. A series of events, very unlooked for, had made his wife and himself, who had for so long been to each other like the apples of their eyes, almost perfect strangers for several weeks; and the pleasure that he felt in seeing her thus recovered, and seated beside him at this sacred ordinance, was strangely dashed by what he knew was the state of her feelings.

with regard to himself. But the long extempore prayer was immediately proceeded in, and the abundance of the heart of the deeply-impressed minister gave forth things, in his fervent address to the Deity, which took their tone much from the emotions that struggled in his bosom with reference to her, whose case lay now so heavily on his spirit.

It was no common prayer offered to the Father of mercies and the God of all grace and consolation, which now ascended up to Heaven from the burning heart of the pious minister of Hillington. It was an unbosoming of himself, and on the part of his people, to the Deity, which touched the hearts of all present, with an unction and a fire almost beyond utterance; He knew he was praying both for Rebecca and himself, as well as for his beloved communicants around, now also deeply affected; but what *she* felt at every word that he uttered while standing trembling, under the influence of her feelings, almost by his side, it would not be easy to find language to express.

The assembly sat down; and the bread was

broken and distributed to the disciples, while the whole congregation was melted in tears, and all thought they never had witnessed such deep feeling in their minister. But not a tear would come from the eyes of Rebecca, although the crowding emotions which struggled for vent in her bosom were mounting fast to something surpassing the mastery of human infirmity. Continuing speaking to the communicants the words of consolation, while the elders went down the passes with the elements, as is the manner of the Scottish church, Mr. Banatyne next "took the cup," and gave one to the clergyman on his right; but, in handing the other to his left, he was so strangely overpowered and confused in his thoughts, that, instead of giving it to Mr. Bryce, who was the person next to him, he handed it at once to his own beloved wife.

Rebecca, who was looking up in his face at the moment, took the cup from his hand, and, putting it to her lips, drank of the symbolic wine, under the influence also of overpowering and absorbing feelings, which prevented her

from being sensible to any impropriety, while the elders, who stood looking on, and the other people near, were quite struck with this strange and unexpected communication.

To both, this was a peculiar and an awful moment. It was a solemn communion of both with their Heavenly Father; but it was also an involuntary communion between husband and wife, expressing thoughts and feelings which language could not evolve. “He whose death we are now commemorating,” went on Mr. Bannatyne, in his exhortation at the time to the communicants, “who was himself deeply touched with a feeling of our infirmities, enters into the closet of our inmost spirits, and draws the poison from the wounded mind; for, knowing our frame, and remembering that we are but dust, he forgiveth all our wanderings and healeth all our sorrows; and when heart and flesh do faint and fail, he has promised to be himself the strength that we need and our comfort for ever; that comfort and support, which all who love Him ought, also, in this world of trial, to be constantly to each other.”

At this moment the still solemnity of the communion was broken by a scream, which appalled every heart, to the outermost aisles of the church; and the people simultaneously rose to look round them for the cause. The scream was from Rebecca ; and what must have been passing in her bosom, while her Lewis uttered these words, no language can describe ; but her cry was so loud, and yet so mournful in its expression, that every heart was pierced as with a sharp instrument, to the very extremity of the assembly, and all were horrified at the suspicion of what could have taken place to the lovely wife of their much-regarded minister.

It was, indeed, a sad moment for him, and an awful interruption of the solemn services of the day. The working emotions of Rebecca, which she had mastered in her solitary chamber at Lawford, and borne up against during all the time of the supposed alienation of her husband's affections, proved too strong for the cutting conviction that she had on that morning been blaming him wrongfully ; and thus, all

that was favourable to exciting the malady of her family, meeting together in her breast at the moment of their mutual communion, over-powered that reason, at last, of which she had so long been jealous; and the unhappy Rebecca was obliged to be carried out of Hillington church, now evidently, at length, in the masterless paroxysms of insanity.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was a strange tale that was told from mouth to mouth through all the parish of Hillington, that the minister's lady had gone out of her mind on the sacrament Sabbath day, and had screamed out in the kirk at the very communion table. It was a sad event to all but one within the walls of the ancient mansion of Lawford.

Every suspicion regarding her, which had been infused by the crafty widow, and which the affectionate minister had so deeply repented of indulging, was now fully confirmed, to Mrs. Chapman's infinite gratification, by the manner which the unhappy lady evinced, during the frightful insensibility of madness. The experience of the past would not from henceforth allow Mr. Bannatyne to absent himself from her: she now exhibited a general alarm whenever he came near her; and when, in particular, he spoke to her with kindness, she

seemed ready to hide herself in the very stone of the wall, in her maniac anxiety to flee from his presence.

Rebecca now, with the wild but pathetic obstinacy of the peculiar state of her mind, took up her abode in the chamber next to that deserted one before alluded to, which contained the portraits of her line of ancestors, most of whom had spent the last days of their unhappy existence in that very apartment to which she from this time would cling and claim as her own. In the mean time, letters with the painful intelligence of what had occurred had reached her uncle, and, in three days after the event, the old gentleman had returned to Lawford, in company with the valued friend of the family, Doctor Heywood.

It was a sad sight for the worthy Doctor, who had taken so much interest on behalf of Mrs. Bannatyne, to see her as he did on his arrival at Lawford; and it was a sadder meeting which took place in that ominous chamber between her and her excellent and grieved uncle. Yet she was perfectly tranquil, and even wildly

sensible. Her face was pale and her eyes were dilated; and though she said little, and looked humbled and sad in their faces, there was a touching pathos in the tones of her voice, which melted the hearts of her visitors with sorrow.

“ Uncle, good uncle,” she said, caressingly hanging on the old man, “ how long is it since I have seen you? Many a weary day have I spent in Lawford since you left us; and are you really come back to see me at last? Bless you, uncle! but I am happy to see you! Yes, I am very happy. I am quite happy now! for I always knew it was ordained I should come to this little room at last. And here I shall remain by day and by night, until the ladder is let down for me to climb to heaven by; and then I shall mount—mount—aspire and struggle: —how finely saith the poet,

‘ Oh, the pain — the bliss of dying !’

What makes you look so sad, sir?”

“ I am sad for you, Rebecca. I wish you would leave this room, and come down stairs again.”

"Oh, no, no, dear uncle! are not these all our ancestors' pictures in that next room, that I am so well acquainted with? Did not my father and grandfather live in this room, and look out at this little window, till the day of their deaths? Did not my grand-aunt live in this room—and see you there abroad—is that not the Lady's Linn on the height, where she drowned herself, poor soul! when the evil spirit mastered her? I will not leave this room, sir — never till the last!"

"God help her; poor heart!" said Mr. Prior, turning away his head, and wiping off the tears which started into his eyes.

"And I am happy to see you too, Doctor —good Doctor," she continued, smiling with melancholy wildness in that gentleman's face, as she clung to his arm, "and I love you—love you much, Doctor Heywood, for you were the man that got my Lewis and me married. These were happy days, Doctor! but Lewis has quite changed, and hates me now; does he not, goody?—you told me so," she said, with a bitter expression, as she turned towards

Mrs. Chapman. “ But I thought he had made it up with me one Sabbath day in Hillington church, when he gave me the red wine to drink, out of the silver cup, with his own hand, and the tables were covered with a white linen cloth before me; but a darkness came across my eyes, and a ringing rung in my ears, and the owls seemed to scream from the rafters of the kirk, and voices sounded from the hollows of the steeple, and the minister and all left me alone at the Lord’s table, and I ’ve never seen him since. Alas, for me !”

The gentlemen descended, much affected, to the room below, where the melancholy minister waited to receive them ; and a serious and lengthened consultation took place as to what was to be done in regard to the unfortunate lady.

One of the first things that struck Doctor Heywood, on his entrance once more into Lawford House, and especially on his ascending to the apartment which Rebecca had chosen, was a palpable error in his own management in regard to her who might now be called his

patient, and which arose from the character of his mode of philosophising upon insanity, as was briefly hinted at several chapters back. The Doctor had accustomed himself so much to generalise the application of principles which he understood with perspicacity, that he overlooked those details of practice and those considerations of exception and individuality, which so essentially change the bearings of many general conclusions. Had he attended, as he ought, to the *history of the maladie héréditaire* of the Priors of Lawford, he would have seen at once the great effect of the constant presence of those objects which handed down to each generation a crowd of associations, calculated to keep constantly before the mind all the sad circumstances which that history furnished; and, in venturing to advise the marriage of Rebecca, he would have carefully withdrawn her, from that moment, from the scene of the afflictions which had almost destroyed the house of Lawford.

There were other things that occurred to him, in consequence of what fell from Rebecca

as well as from what was related by the minister himself, that made him resolve carefully to sift the conduct of those who were much in the way of his patient; but, before he could obtain opportunity of any other than a general conversation with Mrs. Chapman, he heard with surprise that the latter lady had talked of giving up her charge, for what cause he could not learn, while, in the mean time, chance threw him in the way of a very familiar and unexpected *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Dryburgh. Having, besides, perceived something in the manner of Rebecca, which quite cheered him as to what could be done for her, and having found little satisfaction in what he could learn from Mrs. Chapman, he was well pleased, for the present, to encourage the communicative spirit of the loquacious Lady Bicknel.

“ Weel, sir, dear me, Doctor,” said the lady, “ but it’s a pity that ye ha’e gi’en up the doctor trade ; ye’ll excuse me, for I hear you so much roosed up for your skill an’ sense, an’ ye hae sic a notion of the women’s complaints, and sic a handicraft about them, Mr. Heywood, that it

maun be a perfect pleasure to see you lay your finger on a pulse. But I'm thinking the minister's wife is in a state that's beyond your skill. Ae, but she's a heavy handfu' to the puir minister, an' she never was a wife for the like of him. Noo, if onything was happening her—which would be a great relief, nae doubt, frae the way she's in—I'm just thinking what the minister would do, the dear gentleman : —what think ye, Doctor?"

" Really, Mrs. Dryburgh, I have formed no opinion ; but what makes you talk upon such a supposition ?"

" Oo, sir, it's no a'thegither my suppose—it's Mrs. Chapman's suppose, too ; for the puir demented creature canna live lang in yon way, for she eats just nothing. Now, if ought were happening, I ken somebody that would jump at the minister. Od, but I maybe shouldna tell you, sir."

" Why not tell me, Mrs. Dryburgh, if I'm such a man about the women as you say ?"

" Deed, sir, as you're a jocose sort o' man, an' likes a crack, I can tell you that, that

sneck-drawing widow would gie the very eye out of her head for the minister's little finger, if that dowie creature the present Mrs. Bannatyne were awa', an' I dinna see but ye might speak a gude word for her yoursel, Mr. Heywood (if onything should be likely to happen), an' if she got an inkling o' that, I'm sure the very thought o't would gar her wait on this demented lady, till see what might turn about."

A light flashed across the mind of Doctor Heywood, at this conclusion of the speech, that raised thoughts and suspicions on the instant, the bare idea of which almost took his breath from him. But, suppressing any indication of the ideas that had struck him, he merely said,—

I've certainly heard of such things as parties speculating about prospective marriages in this way, but, having no skill in match-making, I cannot pretend even to form an opinion upon the subject: but now, Mrs. Dryburgh, allow me to ask you, if, in your intercourse backwards and forwards with Mrs. Chapman, and as far as you had opportunity of observing Mrs. Bannatyne, before the period of her

screaming out in the church, you witnessed any particular repugnance, on her part, to the company of her husband?"

"Why, sir, as to repugnance, ye see, sir, I canna just say, Doctor; but if you would make your meaning a wee thought clearer, and not use such lang-nebbed words, I would answer you to the best o' my pith; for, to tell you the truth, although I was weel brought up at the buirding schools, an' the tip-top masters, I have not what ye ca' much dictionary learning."

"Have you ever observed, madam," said Mr. Heywood, with some shortness of manner at the dawdling talkativeness of Lady Bicknel, "that Mrs. Bannatyne seemed to have a dread to meet with her husband, or did you ever hear her express alarm at the idea of his visiting her?"

"Why, sir, to speak the honest truth, I never heard her speak much at all. But Mrs. Chapman told me that she was quite against his seeing her, which I thought very unnatural. And yet, one day, now when ye remind me——"

"Well, madam?"

"I thought it very odd after that; for I heard her say, sae pitiful, to Mrs. Chapman, 'Does my Lewis never offer to come to see his forlorn Rebecca?' that was the very words, and the puir young lady looked sae wistful. But then ye ken, sir, she was not hersel, an' quite maunered in her mind."

"And what did Mrs. Chapman say to that?"

"I didna hear ony reply, sir, an' I think the widow only shook her head."

Doctor Heywood rose hastily, and began with long and rapid strides to pace up and down the room.

In a few minutes after, he was out and through the house, looking for an opportunity of speaking privately with Mr. Bannatyne.

"Have you attended to my wishes, sir," he said, somewhat abruptly, on meeting him, "not to go near your lady's apartment, since my return to Lawford?"

"I have never seen my poor Rebecca since your arrival here, sir," said the minister, with a melancholy expression, "and your injunctions are exceedingly painful: besides, were it not for

my confidence in you, I should be strongly inclined to doubt of their wisdom."

"You speak, as most men do, from your feelings and wishes only, and little from reason, my dear sir," said the Doctor : "you must give me your entire confidence, Mr. Bannatyne; for this is the physician's first requisite for success : have I it, or not?"

"You have it unreservedly, sir," said the minister ; "for Heaven's sake do as you will in my house, only restore to me, if it be possible, my beloved Rebecca."

"Then, sir, remain where you are until I return," and without another word the Doctor left him alone.

But a few minutes elapsed, in painful mental suffering, when the Doctor again entered the room, accompanied by Mr. Prior.

"I have brought you together, gentlemen," he said, "in order that you may both judge of the result of a conversation I have just had with that viper, Mrs. Chapman. You start, as all good men do, at unexpected treachery ; but had you seen as much as I have of the baseness of

the base, of the cruelties practised upon those who are least able to bear mental pain, and that on the convenient plea of their insanity, you would be no way astonished at what I have now discovered. In two words, I am convinced that this woman, whom we all trusted, whom I was the means of recommending to this respected family, has been practising on the mind of her unhappy lady, for the purpose of sending her ultimately to the grave, with the presumptuous hope of one day sitting in her own chair at the head of Mr. Bannatyne's table! Well may you be astonished, sir, living as you have lived, and occupied as you have been. Even *I* would be incredulous, after all I have seen, did I not know that the whole struggle of selfishness in this world consists in one species of mind taking advantage of another,—the cunning deceiving the upright and virtuous, — the coarse fattening upon the sufferings of the fine, — the obtuse and cruel making a prey of the sensitive; until the capacity to feel is justly regarded as a misfortune, and one half of the world is almost driven to insanity by the oppression of the other.

"Your astonishment silences you," continued the Doctor, after a pause, "and you wish to be further satisfied? You *shall* be so, fully, else I am mistaken, if you will observe the result of my communication with this person, and the representation she is likely to make to her most injured lady. This you shall soon do, if you will condescend to place yourselves where you can overhear what they say. You consent? Then follow me. We can get, unobserved, into the recess, immediately contiguous to Mrs. Bannatyne's apartment."

They all proceeded towards the chamber: but while the minister expressed the relief that Doctor Heywood's opinion had given to his mind, he almost feared when he reverted to the painful scene in the church, that the surmise was too joyful to be true; and put further questions as to the likely nature of the disorder, as well as to the necessity of such a mode of satisfying themselves, as they now were unwillingly about to adopt.

"Did you know, sir," said the Doctor, "how many persons have been persuaded that they

were insane, or actually made so by others, when under the influence of strong feeling, you would not spare any pains to get at the bottom of the character of those who are chiefly about the person of your lady. My suspicion now is, that mere desponding hypochondriasis, which may be transient in its duration like a fit of passion or of sorrow, is all that at present divides her from her family, and has been entirely brought on, I conceive, by the cunning arts of this horrid woman. But haste, and we shall speedily ascertain."

When the gentlemen had mounted the stairs, and placed themselves where they could plainly hear what passed between Mrs. Chapman and Rebecca, the low murmuring tone of plaintive sorrow, in which the latter spoke in answer to the widow, struck upon the heart of Lewis with such affecting impression, that he was with difficulty prevented from rushing at once into the room.

"To leave me again, did you say?" said Rebecca, her voice rising as she seemed to meditate upon the widow's words; "you can-

not mean so, Mrs. Chapman! Not, surely, without seeing me and his child."

"I heard no wish of the kind expressed," said the widow: "truly, madam, I pity you deeply. She who has outlived the affections of a husband that she loves has little inducement to prolong a neglected existence."

"What a change has come over the spirit of my life!" said Rebecca, resuming her plaintive tone: "even this very morning I rose unusually refreshed, for my dreams were of Lewis and my lovely baby, and the thoughts that used to hang like a heaviness on my heart seemed to have vanished before some unusual sunshine. But now all is gone again, and I am weary, weary of my life. Neglected?—lost the affections of my husband?—was not that the word you said, Mrs. Chapman?"

"Yes, madam, that was the word; and before I should be so used, I would—would do some rashness—I am a strong passioned woman, but——"

"Why don't you say it all?"

"I would slip out of this room when the

gloaming came down, and end my life and my wrongs at the bottom of that linn there on the height among the trees."

"What frightful temptation is this coming over me?" said Rebecca, with a shudder.
"Woman, what is this you hint at? I see something horrid in your face."

The widow merely looked at her, and shook her head.

"Surely, Mrs. Chapman, you are not advising me to take away the life that God hath given me! And have I not a baby — a lovely baby, and my Lewis will not come and see him or me? Neglect! pity! what words are these that I have been hearing of late? and from you? Your pity, woman! that art eating my bread, and ought to comfort me under my trials. What is this? Can this be called insanity? Am I a maniac because I love my husband? Woman, you are imposing upon me: answer me one question — did Mr. Bannatyne really say he would not see me?"

"Not exactly, madam; but I told him — that —"

“ Wretch ! there is guilt in your face ! your tongue falters, and your eye quails at my questions. What thought is this breaks upon me ? Now I remember the horrible insinuations you uttered to that ignorant creature, Mrs. Dryburgh, while I lay on my sick couch. Now I see it all ! You have made me contemptible in the eyes of my beloved husband ! You have persuaded me against my own convictions almost into madness itself. When I think of all that I can now recollect, a crowd of horrible suspicions rises into my brain; that I can hardly attribute to humanity. Out, vile woman ! that speaks to me of the drowning pool of the lady’s linn, and hast put evil and alienation between me and my husband !”

What an impression there is in talent ! what a majesty in truth ! As Rebecca spoke, her delicate figure seemed to tower upwards into the size of an incensed queen, while the quailing widow sunk lower and lower, until, overwhelmed with confusion that the other had penetrated her, she at last sunk in supplication at her feet.

" You wrong me, lady," said the alarmed widow ; " your own mind is wronging us both. If Mr. Bannatyne was as before, surely —"

" I will not hear you, widow ! You are deceiving me about Lewis. He loves me still : I know he does ; for, when we sat together at the table of the Lord in Hillington church, I myself saw the affection that beamed in his eye : and he prayed for me—I know it was for me, until the big tears rolled down his trembling lips, and he gave me the cup with his own hand. I will go down this instant and humble myself before him. I will confess that my poor mind has wandered, and that my temper requires indulgence. Give me my shawl. Nay, attempt not to prevent me—for a woman's affection is strong as death, and mighty as the grave—as the grave, woman ! where it only can be ended."

Voice were now heard in the adjacent apartment :— " Stand back—come forth !" said Mr. Heywood, as the panting minister came forward, eager to receive into his arms his distracted wife ; and, as they retired a few paces

into the large ante-room, the door burst open, and Rebecca, followed by the widow, issued hastily forth.

Her start at the sight of the three gentlemen was neither so sudden nor so alarmed as that of Mrs. Chapman. Standing stock-still for a moment, while no one had as yet the power to move, she gave a slight scream of joy, and threw herself forward into her husband's arms.

"I knew you would come to see me! I was sure you would not quite desert me! Oh! Lewis!" she said, looking piteously in his face, as she held him round the neck, "forgive and pity the wandering and the weakness of your poor Rebecca."

"I have been deceived, Rebecca," he said, at length, as he dried his eyes, while Mr. Prior, and even the physician, were also affected to tears. "I have been abused. I have been misrepresented. I never wished to desert you. I will watch over you myself from hence, and be a stay to you in all your wanderings; for you are my wife—my valued, my adored wife.

Now, come down with me, and away from that detestable woman, and this day shall be a day of rejoicing at Lawford."

" And my uncle, too !" she said, grasping hold of his hands—" my dear uncle: surely I am not quite astray in my mind, or I should not so feel the joy of this happy moment. And has this woman been deceiving you too ? Alas, widow, it was cruel of you to vex the hearts of those who loved as we have done."

" Hence, cockatrice ! " exclaimed Doctor Heywood, swelling with indignation, as he looked on the abashed and confounded widow. " Woman, you are not fit to *live* in a world where there is already so much misery, when you could have the heart to drive to temporary madness such a sweet spirit as this ! "

Why need we tell further what more happened at Lawford, to the joy and pleasure of all the kind hearts who dwelt far and near in the parish of Hillington ? Whatever distraction of the mind had happened to Rebecca was soon dispelled by the affectionate conduct and constant society of her husband, and the judi-

cious attention of Doctor Heywood; the latter, after Mrs. Chapman was disgracefully dismissed, insisting upon an entire change of scene to Rebecca, and that she might be taken from beside the unpleasant associations connected with the history of her ancestors. The health of her mind was fully completed by an easy excursion to the capital, and was insured by an ultimate removal entirely from the old mansion of the family.

Months and years, since these events took place, have now passed away, and Rebecca is still the beloved wife of Mr. Bannatyne, without experience, or dread, of any mental aberration; living in tranquillity and happiness, mother of a numerous family of promising sons and daughters, who, the uncle having died at a good old age, have since grafted the name of Bannatyne, with good hopes and prospects, upon the ancient designation of the Priors of Lawford.¹

¹ See Note B to this tradition.

NOTES

TO THE TRADITION OF
THE PRIORS OF LAWFORD.

NOTE A, page 109.

THE ancient governments, considering the children of their citizens as belonging to the state, were more watchful upon the subject of marriage, for the obtaining of a healthy progeny, than seems to be thought necessary in modern times: and the Romans, recognising from experience the principle of mania being hereditary, passed the severe law, that, if persons dared to marry in the consciousness of this taint, they were to be punished with the same severity as was vestal incontinence; namely, both parties were to be buried alive, that so frightful a disorder might not be propagated.

NOTE B, page 299.

The names and local allusions in this story, as in that of Lady Barbara of Carloghie, are entirely imaginary, and we abstain from all particulars, for reasons which must be

NOTES TO THE PRIORS OF LAWFORD. 301

obvious to the reader. That in forming a connection so interesting as marriage, however, attention should be given to many enquiries of the deepest importance to individuals, both for their own sakes and that of generations of posterity, will be evident from a little consideration of what experience has ascertained, and physiological enquiries have set forth. This is indeed the true moral of many painful cases of the sort we allude to, that have come within our personal enquiries, and which we have endeavoured to illustrate in the Dominie's tale.

The facts illustrative of the well-established doctrine of the transmission from generation to generation of peculiar qualities, both physical and mental, are not only most curious and interesting, *philosophically*, but deserve a much greater degree of attention *practically*, than they usually meet with from a thoughtless world, unwilling to learn what is most important for it to know, and constantly swayed, upon such a subject, by some predominating motive or passion, which, for the time being, is all in all.

That, in the transmission of life, both animal and vegetable, every thing is uniformly *after its kind*, is a rule of nature observed from the beginning; and to its extreme importance to ourselves and our posterity in the formation of unions, and the entailing of existence, we would do well to take heed. Hence the decided characteristics observable in families, not only in bodily form or strength, but for virtue or for vice, for feebleness or for capacity, especially where their position obliges them much to marry among each other. "In this way," says Dr. Gregory (not to speak at present of the obvious mental qualities by which many of the prominent families of Europe are distinguished), "parents frequently live over

again in their offspring; certainly children are born similar to their progenitors, not only in expression of countenance and form of body, but also in the character of their minds, in their virtues, and their vices. The imperial Claudian family, for a long time, flourished at Rome, brave, fierce, proud: it produced the cruel Tiberius, who was a most gloomy tyrant; it numbered among its members a Caligula, a Claudius, an Agrippina, and at last, after a duration of six hundred years, terminated in Nero himself." — *Gregory Conspect. Medicinæ Theoreticæ*, p. 4. Edin. 1815.

Not only are the mental qualities very generally transmitted (though rarely to all their extent of *power*), but also the peculiar conformations of the person.

" It appears to be a general fact," says Dr. Prichard, " that all connate varieties of structure, or peculiarities which are congenital, or which form a part of the natural constitution impressed on an individual from his birth, or rather from the commencement of his organisation, whether they happen to descend to him from a long inheritance, or to spring up for the first time in his own person,—for this is perhaps altogether indifferent,—are apt to reappear in his offspring. It may be said, in other words, that the organisation of the offspring is always modelled according to the type of the original structure of the parent.

" On the other hand, changes produced by external causes in the appearance or constitution of the individual are temporary, and, in general, acquired characters are transient; they terminate with the individual, and have no influence on the progeny."

This transmission, through families, of original con-

formation, applies not only to external form and peculiarities of shape, &c., but to the *type* of character and disposition, or even to some malformations of the mind or constitution, usually denominated disease. Of the former sort many curious instances are on record, as the case mentioned by Maupertuis and adverted to by Prichard, of two families in Germany which had been distinguished, for several generations, by six fingers on each hand, and as many toes on each foot. The instance of the family of Jacob Riche, the surgeon of Berlin, belonging to one of these, is curious, who had the twelve toes and fingers. He inherited this from his mother and grandmother: the latter was married to a man of the ordinary make, to whom she bore eight children, four of whom had only the ordinary number of these, like the father, and the other four had the long and short *sixes* like the mother.

There are even instances of similar peculiarities running through families mentioned by Pliny. The Philosophical Transactions record an instance where the writer had known of the transmission of supernumerary fingers and toes for four generations; and in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, vol. iv., is an account of a family at Iver who for nine generations had transmitted a peculiarity of this sort, in general only through the women. The imperial house of Austria has had transmitted through it, for many centuries, as we learn from Archdeacon Coxe, a singular thickness of the upper lip, which is believed to have been originally introduced into the Hapsburg family by an intermarriage with the ancient house of Jagellon.

But it is a singular and wise provision of Nature, that

though she transmits, until accident terminates them, these *her own original formations*, she never transmits the external mutilations or alterations performed by man, as in the case of cutting off of limbs or splitting of ears, or docking of the tails of animals. Were she to do this, human caprice, fancy, or fashion would soon throw all nature into monstrous confusion.

But the liability of the peculiarities of the mind, and even of some of the more rooted diseases interwoven into the constitution, to be transmitted and entailed upon one's posterity, deserve a degree of attention which the subject seldom receives even from the more thinking part of mankind.

"It is well known to medical practitioners," adds Dr. Prichard, "that (the doctrine of transmission) equally applies to those minute varieties of organisation which give rise to peculiarities of habit or temperament, and *predispose* to a variety of morbid affections, as deafness, scrofulous complaints, and the whole catalogue of disorders in the nervous system. Even those singular peculiarities termed *idiosyncrasies* are often hereditary, as in the instance of a remarkable susceptibility of the action of particular medicines, such as mercury."—*Prichard's Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, vol. ii. p. 539., &c.

Insanity, as a disease, like other diseases which, being inwrought into the physical constitution, is transmissible, would seem, from its connection with the brain, to partake of the hereditary qualities both of body and mind. Upon the general subject, however, we have been favoured, since the foregoing story was written, with a communication from our respected friend, Sir Andrew Halliday,

of Hampton Court, M. D., formerly physician to his Majesty, when Duke of Clarence, then living at Bushy, and himself author of some tracts on insanity,—which we consider peculiarly valuable. Sir Andrew, speaking of the admitted effects of families constantly intermarrying among each other, or, in the language of farmers and jockeys, in reference to cattle and sheep, “breeding in and in,” says, “that breeding in and in deteriorates the race, is a fact known to all men; and that diseases accidentally engendered very soon become hereditary, is equally well established; and insanity, as a bodily disease, is one of those that are easily continued from one generation to another. Yet the fact seems not so well known, or is not attended to as it ought, that it is the *physical* qualities of the *male parent*, whether good or bad, that are chiefly formed in the offspring, and the *mental* endowments of the *mother*: that is, a strong healthy father will have a strong healthy son, even though the mother may be so diseased or delicate, as not to survive the birth; but a puny father will never have a healthy progeny, even though married to the finest woman in the nation. If you want to have good lambs,” adds Sir Andrew, characteristically illustrating his position by the example of domestic animals, as he understands farming, “never regard the condition of the ewes, but take care to provide good strong healthy tupps.”

“Insanity,” he goes on, philosophically, “arises from *physical* causes, that is, *weakness* or *irregularity* in the construction of the instruments of the mind. The healthy strong energetic father gives the *instruments* which, when cultivated in earliest infancy, by the *sound mind* of a superior mother, forms the man of talent; and

nothing else will do it. The males of a family in which the predisposition to insanity exists, should all be emasculated, but the females may be allowed to marry as they please; for though they may become deranged themselves, they will not taint their children. This I hold to be a fact, as I have ascertained beyond a doubt."

The extensive observation of Sir Andrew, both at home and on the Continent, as well as his sound natural sagacity, entitles his opinion, on such subjects, to the highest consideration; and had these important conclusions been as widely made known as it is our wish to make them, many painful cases of family distress, from the apprehension of insanity, which have come under our own observation, where sensitive and high-minded females were the sufferers, might have been greatly mitigated, or rather, as we believe, entirely saved.

With regard to the effects of particular families marrying for many generations continually among each other, considered to be so deteriorating to any race, which forms such an objection to hereditary honours, and which furnishes such men as the late President Jefferson with his republican sneer against the sovereigns of Europe, we have met with many facts that we consider curious and interesting, but none so little known or so applicable as two for which we are indebted to the same authority. When the first De Bruise, grandfather of the Scottish hero, of whom we have hereafter to speak further, obtained from David I. the lordship of Annandale, north of the Tweed, the Celtic inhabitants, whom he found on his new property, were too proud and independent to do any menial labour for a Saxon, as Bruise originally was; con-

sequently, when he planned his castle of Lochmaben, he was obliged to import from England all his domestic establishment to do the work of building. These he located near him, and as they increased he formed them into four divisions, founding for them towns, which are known to this day by the names of the Four Towns of Lochmaben. The people who formed this English colony were, by the natives around, so despised, that they were shunned as if they had been lepers, and obliged constantly to marry among themselves : they have long formed a distinct race, and are called by their common appellation, although all the reasons that originally made them so have for centuries ceased to exist. These people are so evidently inferior to all around them, that no one has ever risen up among them who has shown any qualities to remove the stigma by which they are known. They are even lower in stature than the usual standard of Scotsmen ; and Sir Andrew thinks they have less than common physical strength, besides being known in the neighbourhood as "*a quarrelsome and litigious race;*" — characteristics certainly bespeaking no enlarged capacity.

The other instance is to be found in the small island of Lismore, in Argyleshire, where a colony of English was originally planted by the Bishop of the Isles, under similar circumstances. These foreigners being despised and avoided for the menial services they performed for the priesthood, and forced to continue intermarrying among themselves, became so deteriorated in every manly quality, as to obtain the local soubriquet of *the Lismore sheep* ; and, to cry "*baa,*" like that animal, in the presence of a native of this island, is so mortal an offence,

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that, during the American war, when some of them had enlisted in the army, bloody quarrels were often the consequence of this trick upon the Lismore men. Some other instances of similar effects from colonisation in the isles are given, as we believe, by Colonel David Stewart, in his "Sketches of the Highland Regiments."

MACDONALD OF GLENCO,
AND
JEANIE HALLIDAY OF ANNAN;

OR,

THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY OF JOHNSON, OR
JOHNSTONE, LATE MARQUESSES AND EARLS OF
ANNANDALE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was about the beginning of the ninth century, or, perhaps, a few years later, that the Craithnæ, a tribe of the ancient Celts or Britons, finding their banishment into Ireland irksome, or the boundaries of Ulster too confined for their numbers, determined to retaliate upon their latest oppressors, the Saxons, and, if possible, to recover some of the pleasant valleys of Britain, of which they had not as yet lost altogether the recollection. To this they were urged on by the bards of their tribe, who yet chanted in the halls of their chiefs

the glorious days of Fingal and Ossian, and told of the battles that had been lost and won by the sons of the Gael in the years of their oppression. It may be, too, that some pleasant accounts of the indolence produced by security and of the petty wars among the Saxons themselves, had reached the Green Isle; and that the Celts saw the facility of considerable conquests upon the outskirts of their empire.

However this may be, true it is, as the industrious Chalmers has proved, by authentic documents carefully preserved in his "Records of Caledonia," that about the period we have referred to, a large body of Celtic warriors crossed the channel, that divides Ireland from Scotland, and in a few months drove the Saxon outposts once more within the English border; and having thus conquered, kept possession of the whole peninsula between the Clyde and the Solway Frith, even extending as far east as the river Esk. The hilly lands (now fresh and blooming) of Eskdale-muir formed then the barren desert that separated them from Berwickshire and the Lothians; or the whole was more pro-

bably a forest, and impassable. The leaders of the Celtic host had the country partitioned among them, and it was peopled anew by their brave followers.

The chief to whom our story more immediately relates received as his portion the vale, or dale, of the river Annan, then, as the chronicles tell us, one immense and almost impenetrable forest of oak and pine ; and the buck or the wild boar, that was roused from his lair at the foot of Hartfell, could be followed to the mouth of the Annan Water, a distance of some thirty miles and more, without ever emerging from the shade of the grove.

Here, to the source of the stream which gave its name to the vale, and in the bosom of the mountains from which the Tweed and the Clyde, as well as the Annan, take their rise, the chief of this Craithnæ tribe fixed his residence, and built himself a strong tower, known as the castle of the Corehead. As his people multiplied, and manners changed, surnames began to be assumed, as distinctive marks of a better civilisation; and thus the marauder of

Annandale became known by the name of Halliday.

This appellation arose, as tradition affirms, from the circumstance of the chiefs being accustomed to call his *foray*, or *plundering excursion*, into England “Holyday work;” and when he intended to make a “raid” over the Border, he intimated to the clan, that the day so appointed was to be kept as a “halliday.” However this may be, the mountain that commands the best view of the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and from which the blaze of the war-beacon could be seen all over the vale,—has, from the earliest times, and up to the present moment, been always known as the *Halliday Hill*. Here the people assembled, and here the banner of the chief was unfurled. These were the happy times, when a stout fellow on one side of a stream or a mountain could appropriate the goods and gear of another beyond it, with the greatest freedom and propriety; and when a strong arm and a light foot were of more importance to the making of a man’s fortune

than the tedious accomplishments of learned reading and writing.

And pleasant work it was for gallant fellows to knock a neighbour on the head and drive away his cattle. The chief of the Hallidays had contrived to reside at the Corehead, and to hold undisputed sway in the vale of Annan Water, for more than two centuries, when King David the First, of crafty memory, invited to his court and his country a host of Norman adventurers (the poor sons of England's nobility), who could either claim kindred with his queen, the heiress of Huntingdon, or had been his companions while at the court of his brother-in-law, Henry I.

Among the numbers that crossed into Scotland at this period, our Scottish history has much to do with a certain "Robert de Bruis," son of a Norman baron, then Lord of Cleveland in Yorkshire. This young hero received from the Scottish king a gift of the whole vale of the Annan, — not as it had been made over to the Hallidays, by right of conquest, and as the reward of manhood, but by a *feudal charter*,

a *parchment* holding, as it was called ; a system that had lately been introduced into Europe, and was now the fashionable mode of making the subjects a little more dependent upon the sovereign. To this De Bruis there was conveyed the “allodial” country of the Hallidays, to be held by him of *David the King*, as the charter, bearing date A.D. 1134, says, “*per jus gladii.*”

When land was plenty and men few, this feudal chief would find no difficulty in securing a spot whereon to build a strong dwelling-place; and, accordingly, De Bruis, having selected a piece of land, which juts into a lake of considerable extent in this neighbourhood, and close to the ancient burgh of Lochmaben, began to build ; and by the help of artificers from England soon completed a castle that was sufficient to bid defiance to all the Celtic power in Scotland.¹ Though no longer the independent chief of the district, Halliday still continued in repute, as “the Laird of the

¹ See Note A, at the end of this Tradition.

Corehead," and was venerated as the chief of all that remained of his clan.

But the warlike habits of this people, their detestation of the Norman yoke, and their religious enthusiasm, had led the greater number of them to join the Earl of Huntingdon, the grandson of King David of Scotland, when he became the lieutenant of the gallant Richard of England (*Cœur de Lion*), and marched under his banner to the Holy Land. Their chief, after this, A. D. 1250, had married a sister of the renowned Sir William Wallace ; and their son and heir, *Tam Halliday*, of Corehead, was a devoted follower and favourite captain of his gallant uncle. Thus it was to this young chieftain's valour, and the aid of a hundred of his "Annandale men," that Wallace confessed he owed his famous victory over the Southrons at Biggar.

When Scotland's hero was betrayed to his enemies, Tom Halliday followed his unfortunate uncle to the Tower of London, received his last sigh, and returned to Annandale breathing vengeance against all who wore the livery

of Edward I. He next became a warm supporter of “the Bruce,” and commanded a part of the body-guard at Bannockburn. In his lifetime Wallace having made the old chief, his brother-in-law, governor or keeper of the castle of Lochmaben, he still occupied this charge, when the English army under Edward marched on to the celebrated siege of Caerlaverock.¹

* * * * *

It was about the commencement of the fourteenth century, that the laird of that time found himself left with no heir to his house, save one only and much beloved daughter, yet spoken of in Annandale by the name of “the beauty of Corehead.” Jeanie Halliday was a blithe and comely damsel, with all the warm-hearted good nature characteristic of her people, and all the romance of a wild country maiden, confined to the indolent seclusion of a rich Scottish vale. But having no brother or sister, nor any companion near, but an old wisdom-talking nurse, by eighteen she began to appear restless and brooding, and to feel strange longings to go

¹ See Note B, at the end of this Tradition.

abroad somewhere, just to see what sort of a place the world might be. Her nurse said this was folly, and belonged to the natural discontent of happiness; but the young lady differed entirely from this opinion, and said, that if there was no pleasure in seeing towns and houses where the king lived, there was, at least, a delight in looking upon mountains higher than Queensberry or Orickstane, and rivers broader and grander than the Annan or Moffat Water.

It was one day, while in one of these plaintive moods, that she descried from the narrow window in the square tower of Corehead the dark tartan and ruddy-brown face of a stranger, who was approaching the outer gate of the castle. The traveller was quite unattended, save by a couple of Highland stag-hounds, that ran at his heels; yet he marched up to the entrance with a bold bearing, and by the quick voice of her father, and the bustle she heard among the gillies below, there appeared to be considerable pains taken to receive him. Had not the nurse duenna had as much curi-

osity as the laird's daughter, she would not have allowed her charge to descend from the tower to get better sight and knowledge of the stranger. But being noway behind in this female characteristic, she indulgently acceded to her lady's wishes, and both were soon placed in a situation where they were at little loss as to what was now going forward.

"And what 'll be your name and quality, sir stranger?" enquired the Laird, observing that, because he had not moved his own bonnet, the young man still carried his, with jealous Highland dignity, cocked somewhat tastefully with a declension towards the right ear, showing the thick-curled light-brown locks, that clustered over a bronzed brow and well rounded head.

"I come from the northern airt, whence your own race rose, Corehead," answered the youth: "it's a good country for a manly heart, where the red deer in the forests require a light foot, and the capercailzie on the cliffs a sharp eye. Ye have heard of Macdonald of Glenco?"

"Ye are welcome, youth," said the Laird, with a grasp and a shake of the hand; "welcome is a Macdonald to a Halliday of Core-head. But from the pleasant couries of Glenco you did not come to the Lowlands without a mission or a heraldry?"

"A het hallan is ill to bear," said the youth, "and an angry father ill to face. I come to seek a refuge with the Hallidays of Annandale, until my father's wrath shall be overpast."

"Never shall a true Scot of my name refuse sanctuary and safety to the fleeing stranger," said the Laird, "if no limmer deed, such as a Macdonald could not do, has provoked the just wrath of a parent."

"Ye shall know the deed in a breathing of words," said the youth. "A minion gilly of my father's following went with me to the forest; for the deer is now scarce, and the hunting is long in the bare wilds of Glenco; and the red beasts have taken to the great coverts of Athol. Three days we stalked, and little we got; at last a noble buck fell under aim of my own mark, but the distance was far,

and the animal trailed a space with the bullet deep in his body. The minion was forward, and ran to the spot as the dogs brought down the prey. Presuming on the favour of my partial father, the serf had not patience to give his master the honour that he had won ; and, flourishing his dirk, gave the animal the death with his own hand, just as I came up to finish my own work. To my indignant challenge for this insult, the villain replied with a provoking word and a saucy look. Was I a man or a chief's son, that I was to bear this ? — I spoke to him again, to keep my wrath from boiling over. He muttered between his teeth, in dark Highland sullenness, some insulting words, that he might have taken back, but no man that ever wore the eagle's plume could endure the reckless defiance of his vassal eye. My blood was up in my throat ; my naked dirk was in my hand, for I had drawn it to slay the fallen buck. Into the fellow's body it went, with lightning's quickness, — and ten inches, well planted, are enough to kill even a Macdonald of Glenco. Yet we treated the fellow with

decency, and buried him in the wood in his plaid, as if he had been a born chief. This is my deed, and this its provocation."

" Foogh ! " exclaimed the laird of Core-head, " is that the feud ? A common accident — a trifle for a gentleman. A father to put his son to the angry horn and all for the life of a villain gilly,—'tis a monstrosity ! "

" But my father, the laird," said the youth, " likes to kill his gillies himself, or to hang his villains at his own door, with a solemn decency and a pronunciation."

" No doubt, no doubt—it 's a dignity for a gentleman to be so minded," said the laird ; " but if there 's nougnt in the fray but ten inches of fair steel in the wame o' a rascally gilly, that 'll ne'er be a mote in the marriage o' your father's son, young man ; and so, lads, let us in to dinner."

CHAPTER II.

THE introduction being thus satisfactory between the Laird and his refugee visiter, Jean Halliday and her companion had sufficient opportunity to make their observations on the young stranger. At first the lady did not precisely like him, because, coming to her father's castle as he did, and seeking there an asylum from a father's anger, it was natural to expect that he ought to have been a hero. But ladies' heroes are not every day to be met with ; and though Glenco challenged admiration in several particulars, he was upon the whole different from what her imagination had painted of that sublime character. Though light and athletic like a roe on his own mountains, he was neither very tall of person nor had he a heroic or melancholy look ; and though he spoke and often acted, in reference to his beloved mountain-sports, with all a Highlander's warm enthusiasm, there was a common-sense sagacity in his

ordinary conversation, which was fatal to the high illusions of that romantic abstraction.

Nevertheless, when Ion began to talk still of his own glens in the north, and to describe with discrimination those town wonders of the Scottish court, and those bright deeds of Scottish bravery, which had so highly inflamed Jean Halliday's fancy, the penetrating fire of his light hazel eye began to be felt with power in her inmost spirit, and growing admiration of the active-minded youth took its root in the solid foundation of heartfelt esteem. When first they met, they were not particularly taken with each other, and had almost resolved individually against any thing like love. But virtuous feeling and its adjuncts are deeper and surer, after all, than the unsteady blaze of passion ; and many months had not gone round, ere he had completely won Jean Halliday's heart.

It is a property and part of the delight of that pleasing dream, to dwell in secret enjoyment over its delicious illusions, and to conceal itself if possible from all the world, but particularly from the stern prudencies of a father. They had

courted, and consented, and made wedded vows, and were living, by the connivance of the nurse, together under his roof, agreeably to the peculiar custom of the times,—when Jean Halliday became impressed with delightful anticipations, for she knew that she should soon become a mother.¹

But wedded joys bring wedded cares; and now unwonted anxieties began to becloud the face of the mountain stranger, and intrusive apprehensions to disturb the peace of the Laird's daughter. Strange men from the Highland hills came secretly at night to the castle of Corehead, and stranger reports of broils and blood were brought out of the peaceful valley of Glenco. The tenderness of Macdonald for his Lowland love seemed to increase with his growing concern regarding her; but to all her entreaties, as to the cause of what troubled him, he would as yet give her no satisfaction. At length, one morning, she awakened late from the oppression of a repeated and terrific dream, and the first news she heard was,

¹ See Note C, at the end of this Tradition.

that, long before the dawn of that inauspicious morning, Ion had departed secretly and stealthily from Corehead, and was by this time far on his way towards the bleak hills of the north.

The Laird came in from his morning's hunt, and found nought as usual in the hall of the castle. "What means this desertion of every one here?" he said to the old nurse, whom he met in the passage; "and what noise is this I hear booming above my head, that sounds like the wail of woman's lamentation?"

"It is your daughter Jean; and weel she may wail," said the woman, "for ye've brought a serpent into the house, to sting to the heart the heiress of Corehead; and now when the deed's done, and the ill's wrought, he's off o'er the hills to his ain kin, and left her to sorrow, a vowed wife but a shameful mother."

"Confound you, lassie! have ye done this?" exclaimed the Laird, as his weeping daughter, rushing in as they spoke, now threw herself distracted at her father's feet: "have ye dared to make love and handfast with a land-louping

Highlander, and never a word of consult with your own father. Ho there ! Rob, and Jack, and gilly Tam, where are ye all ? Go, sound the horn from the castle top ; for if there 's a Halliday on the Annan Water, I 'll have the villain's blood or his body ere three days' suns set behind the hills of Galloway."

In vain Jeanie entreated to spare her lover's life. The old man's hot blood was highly up, and ere another hour had sped round the dial, she saw him and his following of hardy Hallidays sweeping off from Corehead, with their faces towards the north, and climbing the then almost perpendicular ascent of the Orickstane Brae.

Three days, however, run quicker round than occurs at the moment to an angry man ; and so it was the last of these ere the Laird and his men found themselves approaching the small town of Callander, whose well-known situation is at the mouth of the gorge of the great pass that leads into the Highlands at Lochearn. At that time it consisted of but a few straggling houses, or huts, scattered with little regularity on each side of the stream ; and the chief " change house,"

or hostelry, which stood out in the centre of the clachan, was by no means commensurate to the accommodation, either as to respectability or number, of a Lowland laird, and his saucy following, even of that day.

“ What’ll ye want here ? ” said a red-headed Highland wench, answering with tardy reluctance the bold knock of the Laird’s gilly at the door.

“ A bed an’ a braxy for the Laird himsel, an’ a brochan an’ down-lying for his honour’s following,” said the man, proudly : “ stand out o’ the gate, ye jade, an’ let his honour in.”

“ The house is fou, an’ there’s nae room,” said the wench, no less peremptorily : “ gang awa’ wi’ your Lowland Laird to some ither door.”

“ Deel’s in the limmer,” said the disappointed Laird, pushing past her ; “ what other door is there here for mense or shelter in your hungry clachan ? ”

A glance within convinced him, however, that the wench had spoken truth ; for the ample kitchen and chief apartments were completely

filled up with great brawny Highlanders, who, crowding towards the narrow passage, laid their hands on their ready dirks, to defend their possession.

The Laird went back for an instant to consult what was to be done; and as he talked with the landlord, who now made his appearance, he observed the little hole in the thatch, which could hardly be called a window, cautiously opened, from which a grey head and hard-featured national face was next thrust out, as if to reconnoitre who sought admittance. A beckoning sign from the Highlander in the thatch at once withdrew the landlord back into the house; who soon, however, returned, and, by his cautious questioning and manœuvring parley, showed some disposition to grant the Laird some accommodation.

“ But who’ll be the lead of this brave following?” enquired Corehead, retaliating in his turn their Highland suspicion.

“ She never speers wha eats her bread an’ drinks her broust if they pay their shot like a shentlemans,” said the host; “ but since his

brave honour frae the hills offers a condescension to the Lowlander, she'll tell her ain name if she likes it, an' if no, she'll haud her whisht."

" But what accommodation can you give to all these men?" said Corehead.

" Hoogh ! isn't there a gude brochan to stay their stomachs, an' an usquebaugh to make a sauce an' a savoury, forbye a lown hill-side to lie on, ahint the house ? and what would his honour hae mair ? But be sure the Lowlanders take care o' their tongues afore the mountain men, when the drink warms, or, faith ! there 'll be red blood the night in the town o' Callander."

Things being thus satisfactorily arranged, the laird was let in, and forthwith introduced to a stately old Highlander, the same who had put his head out from the thatch. A suspicious civility passed between the strangers ; but as, in this country inn, they were both in the condition to want congenial society, they sat down to see what each other was made of.

A few turns of the honest usquebaugh, however, helped greatly to soften down their

original caution, and to induce the lairds, by degrees, to talk allusively of their own affairs. But, though they sidled, and hinted, and fished for each other's words, and moralised, as Scotsmen will do, about certain partly revealed vexations, they still avoided saying any thing direct; although each became more interested in the conversation of the other.

“They’re vile bodies, thae women,” said the Lowland laird, gloomily generalising moralities in his drink; “an’ it’s a hard hap for an honest gentleman to hae naught to heir his fair estate but a witless lassie, that takes up and takes on wi’ every land-louping villain that seeks a hiding frae his kin in her father’s castle.”

“Naught ava! a perfect nothing!” exclaimed the Highlander, “to having a set of godless sons that involve a shentleman in brulzies and broils, until he hardly kens the safety of his ain throat. And they kill, and are killed, till heir and heritor, sib and son, are buried awa in the black yird.¹ Ohon — honerie! that I could catch a sough of my last remaining boy!”

¹ Earth.

To this unexpected pathos of the stalwart laird, Corehead replied by a corresponding groan; and both gentlemen could say nothing, for a little, but swallow down their griefs in simultaneous gulps of the comforting liquor.

“If *I* e'er had a bonnie daughter wi' a pawkie ee,” said the Highland laird, drily, and speaking in the usual style of Job's comforters, “no land-louper man or wild loon, that couldna agree wi' his ain kin, should e'er ha'e been trusted in my castle, to abuse and bamboozle a lassie's heart—so, may be, gudeman, ye just got what ye deserved.”

“The speech is o'er true, though rather saut in the hearing,” said Corehead, penitently. “But if the deceitful villain comes within my clutches, I'll hae his blood or his body, though Glenco himsel should set on against me ! ”

“Glenco ! ” cried the Highlander, half rising from his chair. “Deevil damn ! friend, what is 't ye say ? ”

“I just say, since I've spoken the word, that if auld Glenco, when I win to the hills, doesna

help me to a reparation on his ill-doing son, the Macdonalds and the Hallidays will hae a tulzie that will show what Lowlandmen will do to them, who would put an insult on their chief's daughter."

The old man, starting up, almost overturned the table and the bladder of whisky,—for bottles were unknown in those days,—in his eagerness to embrace Corehead, and to thank him for the news, crying out, "I'm Glenco ! I'm Glenco ! Deevil ! I wonder what blinded my bleered een, that I didna ken a Halliday of Annandale from a common cowardly Sassenach o' the English border."

The lairds now sat down to talk in the greatest cordiality, explaining many things on each side that greatly tended to justify the conduct, and even to raise admiration of the spirited youth, of whom they found they were both in search ; and, some key being now found to his latest movements, Glenco agreed to return with Corehead into the Highlands in search of Ion ; for his eldest son, having been just

killed in a broil with the Grahams, the former was now sole heir of his lands.

Next morning the two lairds were just ready to set forth together, having finished an enormous Highland breakfast, when a stranger from the hills was announced as seeking to speak with the laird. Glenco had hardly given his consent, when Ion, his son, pale and halting as if from a long journey, rushed in, and threw himself at his father's feet.

The explanation and the reconciliation was more than cordial; it was moving — it was enthusiastic: for a father easily forgives his only son, and the son had nothing to pardon in the father.

“ But what made you run from my house, Ion,” said Corehead, shaking him next by the hand, “ with such a sudden mystery, and a suspicious presumption ? ”

“ I had not leisure for old men’s advices and women’s tears, when a brother’s blood was to be avenged,” said Ion, a brave feeling flushing up his pale cheek: “ but now I *have* avenged my brave brother ! I *have* upheld the honour of

my name and clan ; though not, indeed, without a shedding of my own blood that has reduced me to this weakness ;” and, saying this, he sunk exhausted into the arms of the Macdonalds, now all gathered round.

“ Thou shalt not suffer for this, my brave son,” said the Highland laird, “ thou must back to the mountains to show thyself to the clan, for thou art now *Tanister* and heir to my name and house ; but, after that, thou shalt again to the Lowlands, to marry afore the priest the choice of thy heart ; for a Halliday shall never have to complain of a Macdonald of Glenco.”

It was a pleasant journey that Ion had, with his father’s band, in marching back to his mountains and his people ; and a still more joyful day for Jeanie Halliday, when she saw, from the top of Corehead tower, the Macdonald and his hardy followers come winding down by “the De’il’s Beefstand,” and bounding across the pebbly stream of the Annan. The horn sounded loud to call the Hallidays out ; they came forth from every cleugh and glen, like a rushing stream, and, soon flocking together round their happy

chiefs, joined their shouts to the loud screams of the Highland bagpipe in praise of the fair heiress of Corehead and the brave and hardy titular to the name of Glenco.

In a very few days the young pair were married; and, when the priest of Moffat had said the holy words, the laird sent round the usquebaugh as plentifully as water, to the great rejoicement of every Highland heart. When the feast was over, the lads and lasses danced merry reels on the level grass, until the screed of the bagpipes echoed up the glens of the Moffat water, and even as far as the Kinnell, until the sun sank behind the towering summits of Hartfell, Saddleback, and Orickstane.*

It only remains to be told that the old man built a house for the young couple near to where the castle of Lochwood afterwards stood; that the eldest son of this union became laird of Glenco, and the second got the lands of Annandale; that the former was the ancestor of the chief and his kin, who were murdered in the famous massacre of 1690, and the latter, as

¹ See note D, at the end of this Tradition.

Ion M'Ion, or son of John, being thence usually named Johnson, became the laird of Johnston, and the founder of a name well known in that quarter, which long bore many honours, and is widely spread in Scotland at the present time.

NOTES

TO THE TRADITION OF

MACDONALD OF GLENCO, AND JEANIE
HALLIDAY OF ANNAN.

NOTE A, page 319.

THE ruins of De Bruis's Castle are of great extent, and worthy of a visit from the architect or antiquary. When the great grandson of the first De Bruis succeeded to the crown of Scotland, Lochmaben Castle, in Dumfriesshire, became a royal palace, and such it has continued; the Lords of Annandale being generally hereditary keepers. Mr. Hope, who, in right of his mother, succeeded to the Johnstones of Annandale, and has assumed their name, is keeper of the royal palace of Lochmaben. But all the property in and about the ruins belongs to Lord Mansfield, as representative of the Murrays, long Earls of Annandale, and the descendants of Randolph de Moravin, made Earl of Murray by his nephew Robert I. A.D. 1313.

For the materials of this tradition, as well as the historical particulars appended to it, we are indebted

to Sir Andrew Halliday, of Hampton Court, formerly mentioned, known as an intelligent and industrious antiquarian and himself author of a genealogical history of our own royal family, the house of Guelph, and other important works.

NOTE B, page 321.

Robert the First, even after he had gained the crown of Scotland, was still designated Lord of Annandale; being created such by Alexander III. A.D. 1273; but he subsequently gave this lordship to his brother Edward, in 1306, and at *his* death, in 1318, to his uncle Randolph, Earl of Murray. Still the Laird of Corehead held considerable property in the stewartry of Annandale, and was esteemed a chief of the most ancient descent.

NOTE C, page 329.

From the prevalence of the Salic law, or customs, in Scotland, under the Celtic dynasties, arose a strange practice, sanctioned by their laws, and approved of by their morals. The strictness of Scottish entail is well known; and, also, that most of the old tenures were "*male fiefs*." Hence, in Dumfriesshire, and all over the kingdom, it was common for people of condition to "*handfast*" their children, especially their eldest sons; that is their parents agreed that the heir of A. should live with the daughter of B., as her husband, for twelve months and a day. If, in that time, the lady proved with child, or,

became a mother, the marriage was good in law, even though no priest performed the ceremony (the church rites were seldom omitted); but if there was no appearance of issue, the contract was ended, and each was at liberty to marry or "handfast" with any other lover. Hence arose the well-known case of legitimising, by subsequent marriage, children born in Scotland out of wedlock.

There is, at this day, a custom prevalent among the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope, not dissimilar to this, and well known to English gentlemen who make a stay there on their way home from India. The lady is *adopted* without any ceremony, and if fruitfulness is not the consequence, the matter rests where it was; the gentleman goes home to his country, and madam looks out for another lover. But if there is a child to seal the bargain, the roving gentleman is *held fast* by church and law, and the two are henceforth, as the Highlandman would say, "one beef."

NOTE D, page 340.

Queensberry is a famous high mountain, that bounds the Annandale horizon. Orickstane and Orickstane-Brae hang, as it were, over the Corehead; and Hartfell, the highest hill but one in Great Britain, Shawfell, and Saddleback, are mountains of note close around the "auld biggin." "The Devil's Beefstand" is one of the most remarkable dells in the world, and situated at the head of the Annan, and near the top of Orickstane. From the last elevation you have a view of the whole vale of the Annan, from its source where you stand, to its entering the Sol-

way Frith. From Halliday Hill, which is at a short distance from the foot of Annan Water, you have a view, again, up to Orickstane, as well as over into Cumberland and Westmoreland, bounded only by Skiddaw, Stanmore, and Penrith Fells on the south, and by Queensberry, Orickstane, and Hartfell, to the north and east, and by Cribble and the Galloway Hills on the west.

The Hallidays of the olden time were tolerably "notour" robbers and marauders, like the other border clans, as we learn from the ancient ballad of "The Outlaw Murray," a good version of which is given in the first volume of Sir Walter Scott's "Border Minstrelsy." The ballad details the particulars of an expedition of the king (probably the fourth James) to bring into subjection that famous chieftain, who had "a fair castelle, bigged wi' lime and stane," and a "royal companie" of five hundred men. In this affair, Halliday, laird of Corehead of the period, and his son, figure along with Sir James Murray of Traquair, Andrew Murray of Cockpool, and other free-living neighbours of the worthy outlaw, to whom he sent for help against the inconvenient intrusion of the monarch.

There were most cogent reasons for this anxiety on the part of these chiefs, as quaintly told in the ballad: so, when Murray heard the news, nothing daunted, he boldly met the emergency:—

" ' I mak a vow,' the outlaw said,
 ' I mak a vow, and that trulie;
Were there but three men to take my part —
 Your king's cuming full deir sall be !'

“ Then messengers he called forth,
And bade them hie them speedily;
‘ Ane of you gae to Halliday —
The laird of the Corehead is he.

“ ‘ He certain is my sister’s son;
Bid him come quick and succour me!
The king comes for Ettricke Foreste,
And landless men we a’ shall be.’

“ ‘ What news! what news!’ said Halliday,
‘ Man, frae thy master unto me?’
‘ Not as ye wad, but seeking your aid;
The king’s his mortal enemie.’

“ ‘ Ay, by my troth,’ said Halliday,
‘ Even for that it repenteth me;
For gif he lose fair Ettricke Foreste,
He ’ll take fair Moffatdale frae me.’ ”

It was no wonder the old gentleman was alarmed; but he was a man of spirit, and had something in his power, for he immediately adds —

“ ‘ I ’ll meet him wi’ five hundred men,
And surely mair if there need be;
And ere he ’ll lose the Foreste fair,
We a’ will die on Newark Lee ! ’ ”

The other lairds were not less zealous; and, having met together, the chief of Ettrick further addressed them, on their common danger, proposing that four of them should form a regular deputation: —

“ Auld Halliday, young Halliday,
 Ye sal be twa to gang wi’ me ;
 Andrew Murray, and Sir James Murray,
 We ’ll be nae mae in companie.’

“ When that they cam before the king,
 They fell before him on their knee,
 Grant mercie, mercie, nobil king !
 E’en for His sake that dyed on tree.”

To this pathetic petition his majesty returned an exceedingly austere answer ; talking of nothing less than hanging them all “ on gallows hie.” But the nobles who stood round adding their arguments to the bold threats of the outlaw and his friends, and the latter going through the feudal formality of giving up the keys of his castle, the king was pleased to think better of his sentence, and, in short, not only returned him the keys, but made him sheriff of the Forest of Ettrick, the first who had the office, which the family held for many years.

THE END.

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